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THE FUNDAMENTALS
OF
CATHOLIC BELIEF

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BY

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PREFACE

I SHALL state here briefly the character and scope of this book. It is an attempt to set forth in concise form and to explain with sufficient attention to details that part of the Catholic religion which is called *dogma*—that is, the doctrines which we Catholics accept and believe because we know that they are the truths of God revealed to men. It is planned as a companion book to the author's earlier work, *The Externals of the Catholic Church,* which treated adequately the government, sacramentals and ritual of our holy religion. This book will try to explain with equal thoroughness the *doctrines* of Catholicism, the truths which are God's revelation to mankind and which we have learned from an infallible teacher, the Catholic Church.

In such a volume there can be nothing really new. The truths which form the faith of our Church have been taught unceasingly and unchangingly for nineteen centuries; surely nothing has been left unsaid. Any new work purporting to treat of Catholic doctrines can only attempt to assemble and arrange its matter in a somewhat different way, and to include the results of recent research. This book, however, may lay claim to some few features that savor of novelty. It will give a brief and readable account of the theories of astronomers and other scientists concerning the origin and development of this universe of ours, a summary of the vagaries of present-day teachers regarding the beginnings of our race, and the position of the Catholic Church on these much-disputed points. It will show just how much of "evolution" we Catholics can accept, and what part of it we are bound to reject. It will state the fundamental truths of the Catholic faith, will explain each of them as clearly as may be, and will set forth in adequate form the reasons for our belief.

These are days of unrest and denial in matters of religion. The sects which have resulted from the great revolt against our Church four centuries ago are rapidly losing all that they retained of Christian truth when they separated themselves from the centre of Christian unity. The most essential doctrines comprised in God's revelation to man are being openly assailed and denied and even derided, not only by professed unbelievers, but by the leaders of denominations that still call themselves Christian. The fall of man, the redemption, the divinity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His resurrection—these and other fundamentals of faith are being cast aside.

And what is left? No Redeemer and no need of one. No Holy Scriptures, for these are "a collection of Oriental myths." No Church, for each man will form his own creed, if he wants a creed at all; and the religion of Christ will consist, at most, in a vague and futile idea of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

Such seems to be the religion of the future, everywhere except in one Church. And that Church is ours, our teacher given to men by God, that through her they may learn the truths that lead to salvation.

We, who are members of that true Church of Christ, should be able "to give a reason for the faith that is in us." We should have a definite and accurate knowledge of the things which our Church teaches, and we should know the proofs by which the truth of these things may often be demonstrated. We should be able to teach others, clearly and without uncertainty or error, the doctrines which we ourselves believe because we are Catholics.

In other words, we should know *what* the dogmas of our Church are, and *why* we accept them. And this book is intended to give this knowledge in a form that will not be unduly abstruse. Few attempts will be made to unravel the intricacies of scholastic theology; a clear and readable exposition of Catholic doctrines will be its object.

If its pages will aid in imparting to Catholics an accurate and

sufficiently complete knowledge of their glorious faith, and if, perchance, it may be a means of diffusing the light of truth in minds that are seeking that "kindly light," it will amply fulfill the aims and the hopes of

THE AUTHOR.

CENTRAL FALLS, R. I.
October 26, 1924

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INTRODUCTION

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

THIS book will treat of the doctrines of the Catholic Church. That mighty organization stands before the world as the champion of the truths of God, the bearer of His message to mankind. It has a complex system of doctrine, a creed of many parts, because God has revealed many things to men; and nearly every detail of its teachings has been controverted and denied at one time or another. Heresies and schisms have arisen and flourished and died; but the Church of God continues to shine before the world, a beacon-light showing the way to the port of salvation.

Its history goes back through the ages to the days when a little band of Apostles, commissioned by the Saviour of the world and strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God, went forth "from an upper room" to preach in the streets of Jerusalem the truths which their Master had taught them, and then to carry the glorious message of salvation to all the nations of the earth.

The faith and the creed of the Catholic Church, then, are no new thing. They are not man-made. They were given to the world by the great Teacher, who was none other than the incarnate Son of God, and the society which He founded has taught them infallibly for nineteen hundred years. We who are within the fold of that Church are not groping in darkness, not perplexed with uncertainties. We have a heaven-sent guide which cannot lead us astray.

Catholics believe that the truths of God, like God Himself, are unchangeable. They believe that their Church teaches these truths in their completeness, and without the possibility of error. We Catholics have a sense of security which no others can feel.

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There is no doubt, no vagueness, no uncertainty in the Catholic mind concerning the things of faith. The Church of God teaches me such or such a truth and therefore it *is* a truth, precisely *because that Church is God's Church.* As the old motto says, "Rome has spoken; the case is closed."

What a contrast this is to the state of the non-Catholic world to-day! We see around us a multiplicity of sects and thousands of men and women who are of no sect whatever. Intelligent, learned and blind. Wandering without a guide, how can they find the true path? If they hold to a system of doctrine, it is largely the product of a fallible human mind like their own, except for the part which their ancestors preserved when they exiled themselves from their Master's earthly kingdom. In even the more conservative forms of non-Catholic Christianity the exact teachings of a given sect are hard to ascertain, for its tenets are apt to change with the passing years. As a prominent Baptist educator and clergyman said recently, "Why should we give allegiance to a creed that is three hundred years old?"

What a deplorable lack of logic there is in such a statement, made by a college president, undoubtedly educated and intelligent. If a creed was true three hundred years ago, why is it now false? If it was *a real creed* then, really given by God as an effective means of enlightening the world and of guiding man to salvation, why should it not be equally true and equally effective at the present day? The conditions of salvation now are precisely what they were then; God has not changed them, and no one else can do so. There has been no pronouncement, no new revelation from God during that period. If that creed deserved allegiance then, why does it not deserve it now?

"Three hundred years old!" We Catholics have a creed that is far older than that. It is the creed of our Church; and that Church was not founded three hundred years ago. It traces its history back through nineteen centuries not to John of Leyden, nor to Luther, but to Jesus Christ Himself, the Redeemer of our fallen race, to Him who came to take away the sins of the

world, to bring knowledge and grace and salvation to the children of men.

And so, in the many pages that follow, we shall endeavor to set forth the message of truth which the Church of God gives to the world, our holy *Catholic faith.*

Of what are we speaking when we use these words? What do we mean by "faith," and what do we mean by "Catholic"?

Faith. The word has various meanings. Sometimes it signifies faithfulness, sometimes confidence or trustfulness, but in the sense in which we use it when we speak of "the Catholic faith" it means the sum of the truths which have been revealed by God in Scripture and tradition, which His Church teaches to us, and which we accept and believe because they come from God and rest on His authority. It is the system of doctrine which that Church has received from God, and which she is commissioned to teach to all mankind; that system we accept and believe in its entirety *because God has revealed it.* And because by so doing we exercise the great virtue of faith, the title of "faith" is rightly given to the system of doctrine to which we assent.

Catholic. What is the meaning of this word? It is from the Greek, and signifies "universal," "throughout the whole world." When we speak of "the Catholic faith" we mean the teachings of the Catholic Church, a society established by our Lord Jesus Christ to teach the truths of God *universally*—to be an infallible guide for all mankind, in every country and in every age.

This Church is a *visible* Church. It is the "city on a mountain, which cannot be hid." It was founded on the rock of Peter, and it continues its governing and teaching power through his successors in the see of Rome. It is the *only* society which our Saviour founded; he formed it to bring His doctrine and His graces to all mankind.

And now let us see how we acquire knowledge of anything, and how we become certain that that knowledge is true. Let us see *why* we accept this or that Catholic doctrine, or the whole system of Catholic truth.

The Sources of Knowledge. Our human intellect is capable

of receiving knowledge, and it may acquire it in either of two ways: firstly, by *natural reason,* in regard to truths which come within the scope of our reasoning powers; and secondly, by *divine faith,* in regard to truths which are *mysteries,* which exceed the capacity of our human intellect, and which can become known to us only when God reveals them to us.

In the first kind of knowledge (that which we arrive at by natural reason) there may be various degrees. The evidence presented to us may be doubtful, the reasons for and against a certain supposed truth may be rather equally balanced; in such cases we do not attain to certitude, but remain in a state of doubt. Again, it may often happen that the arguments on one side are more forcible than those on the other; then we do not give complete adhesion to that side, but merely have an opinion. And again, the arguments or the authority brought forward may be so convincing that we are absolutely sure that the statement is true; then we have absolute knowledge, or certitude.

In the second kind of knowledge—that which we obtain in regard to the dogmas of faith, especially in regard to those which are in themselves beyond our human capacity—we arrive at this absolute knowledge or certitude *because we know that God teaches them.* Our reason, then, for accepting and believing them is God's authority. There can be no doubt, no mere opinion, when we know that God tells us that a certain thing is true. It may be something entirely beyond our intellectual scope; we may be not only unable to explain it, but even incapable of knowing anything whatsoever about it if God had not revealed it. Judged by merely human standards, it may even seem (in some cases) to be unreasonable, incredible. But we *know* that it is true. Why? Because God tells us so. He cannot deceive us; He is the all-true. He cannot be deceived; He is the all-wise. Nothing is a mystery to Him, because His powers of understanding are not limited like ours. They are infinite.

Let us illustrate the above paragraph by an example taken from our workaday life. A builder knows by merely natural reasoning that a steel beam is stronger than a wooden beam of equal size.

How does he know it? He may acquire this bit of knowledge either by experiment or by deduction or by authority; that is, he may test the two beams to the breaking-point—this is experiment; or he may break smaller pieces of the same materials, whence, by deduction, which is reasoning from comparison, he knows that larger pieces will show proportionate strength; or he can take the word of experts who are familiar with the qualities of such things, which is authority. By these means, or by any one of them, he acquires absolute certainty about the greater strength of the steel beam.

The Authority of God. How is it in regard to the truths which we call dogmas of our faith? Many of these are *mysteries;* that is, our intellect is too limited in its scope to be able to explain them, or even to know of their existence, unless God teaches them to us. Take, for instance, the mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It could not have come to our knowledge at all if God had not revealed it. It cannot be explained by us by any process of natural reasoning, because it is the instantaneous change of one substance into another without any outward alteration, such as in form or size or color—something which is utterly unknown in the natural order of things. And yet we *know* that it is true. We accept it and believe it as a part of our Catholic faith. Why? Because, while we cannot know its truth by experiment or by deduction, we can and do know it by *authority,* and by no less authority than that of the all-knowing God, who has taught it to us through His Holy Church. Therefore we know it with absolute certitude.

We accept many a thing as true on mere human authority. Take examples from our daily life. The astronomer makes abstruse calculations which you or I could not make for ourselves; we accept them as true, because of his authority. The traveler tells us of distant countries which we have not seen and will never see; we believe his narrative, because he is worthy of belief.

Christian faith is the assent of our intellect and the acceptance by our will of all the truths which God proposes to us, simply *because He proposes them.* We know that He cannot err. We

know that He cannot deceive or wish to deceive. Therefore, when He tells us that this thing or that is true we accept it as such. We have far better warrant for its truth than if we ourselves could comprehend or explain it, for we are fallible, prone to error; but He who teaches us is the all-true God. Our Christian faith, then, must be childlike faith. Our heavenly Father teaches us, and we, His children, believe His teaching.

A Gift of God. When we accept and believe a truth revealed by God, we do so by eliciting an *act of faith,* which is "an act of the human intellect assenting to a divine truth, owing to the movement of the human will, which is itself moved by the grace of God." We cannot perform that act, we cannot have any divine faith whatever, without that impelling grace. Hence we see that faith must always be a gift of God, because God's grace is itself a gift, coming to us not through study or other human effort, but through the goodness and mercy of the Almighty. In the words of Bossuet: "The unbeliever, like a blind man, lacks one of his senses; and this can be restored to him by none but God alone."

The "Rule of Faith." "How shall we know the things which we are to believe?" asks the little child's catechism. The answer is, "through the Catholic Church, through which God speaks to us," simple, short and complete.

The living Church of God is our "rule of faith." The word *rule* means here a standard by which we may ascertain just what our faith must be. That living Church, in order to be a reliable standard, must be divine and infallible; that is, it must have been *established by God* to teach His truths, and it must be able to teach *without error.* What authority would a teaching society possess concerning the truths of God if we knew that it was founded by man? Of what value would its teachings be if we were never sure that they were true?

Now, where can we find that living Church, not made by man, and incapable of teaching error? There is one, and one only, the Church against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail," the Church which is "the pillar and ground of truth," and which

is "taught all things" by the Holy Spirit of God, who abides with it forever. It brings to men of every tribe and tongue the same unchanging doctrine. It has taught the same creed in every century since its beginning, and will continue to do so through all the ages to come. That Church is the Catholic Church, which was founded by Jesus Christ, which has proclaimed God's truths to the world for nearly two thousand years, and which will be the infallible teacher of mankind "even to the consummation of the world."

A Summary of Our Faith. The Catholic faith may be briefly outlined as follows: There is a God, and only one God. He had no beginning; He will have no end. He is infinite in knowledge and in power. He is just, and holy, and merciful.

In God there are three divine persons, equal to each other in all things; the one divine nature is possessed by each of these three persons. They are called the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

God is the Creator of every other being, the heavens and the earth, the angelic spirits, the human race and every other thing that has ever been, or is, or will be.

Man, one of God's chief creatures, is endowed with an immortal soul possessing understanding and free will. To him God has given a revelation of His truths through the Holy Scriptures, a series of inspired messages sent through certain men at divers times. He has made a code of moral laws for mankind, and these we call His Commandments.

Because men had fallen away from Him through sin, God sent into the world a Saviour, who was none other than the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." God the Son became man, and was called Jesus Christ. He possesses two natures, that of God from all eternity; that of man since He became incarnate in Mary's womb. He offered Himself voluntarily as a sacrifice for the sins of men, suffering and dying that we might be saved. He rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, that all

mankind might be assured of His divinity and of the truth of His mission.

Jesus Christ established a society among men, to teach them the truths of God; this society is His Catholic Church. He instituted sacraments, seven in number, through which His grace is brought to human souls. He gives eternal reward to those who know Him and love Him and serve Him. He gives eternal punishment to those who, through their own wickedness, fall away from Him, sin against His law, and die impenitent.

Such, in brief, is the list of the God-given truths which constitute our Catholic faith. Such is an outline of the teaching which we have received from God through His Church. We believe each and all of these things because God has revealed them to us. He allows us, through our holy religion, to know Him, His truths and His laws, and His mercy and love. He has provided us with an infallible guide to heaven, our Church; well may we love it. He has given us most efficacious means of obtaining His graces, prayer and the sacraments; well may we value them. He promises us, if we love and serve Him well, an eternity of bliss wherein we shall see Him and know Him as He is, and be the objects of His love forever.

These truths of our Catholic faith and many other things connected with them will be treated in due order in the chapters of this book.

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Chapter I

GOD

IN the beginning, O Lord, thou hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment; and as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art always the self-same, and thy years shall not fail" (Psalm 101).

There is a Being who is eternal, unchangeable, all-wise, all-powerful and all-good. He is the first cause, the Creator of all things. We call that Being by the name of *God*.

The Existence of God. There is such a Being, but how can man know this? How can you or I, dear reader, *prove* that there is a God? How can we, with our limited capacity for understanding, know one who is infinite in goodness and majesty and holiness, in beauty and truth and love?

We cannot know Him with what is called "absolute knowledge," for the finite cannot contain the infinite. The little intellect of man cannot attempt to measure the immensity of God. Even the angels and the saints in heaven, dwelling in His living presence, do not possess absolute or perfect knowledge of Him. They "see Him face to face," they "know Him as He is," but only to the extent of their capacity for knowing. They do not and cannot have a full and complete knowledge of Him, for even in heaven they are still finite, while He is infinite.

Can we, then, we poor wayfarers in this world, know anything of God? Yes. We can know that He exists; that He is all-wise and all-powerful; and that He is the rewarder of good and the punisher of evil. We know these things in two ways: by *reason;* that is, by using the intellect with which man's soul is endowed, and by *revelation,* which teaches us these truths and many more, and which consists in the imparting of truth by God to man.

Our reason teaches us that there is a God, because the works of His hands are spread out before us. From the immensity and beauty of created things we know the wisdom and power of their Creator.

Read these words from the Book of Wisdom, in the Old Testament: "By these good things that are seen, they (the pagan nations) could not understand him that is, neither by attending to the works have they acknowledged who was the workman—but have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. . . . Let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first author of beauty made all these things. Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them that he who made them is mightier than they. For by the greatness of their beauty and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby."

How cogent the argument set forth in these words of Holy Writ! We see a beautiful world around us; its Author must be far more beautiful. We see fire, lightning, and tempest, forces of nature possessing wondrous power; their Maker is mightier than they. We see a universe so immense that never can it be measured by human brain or hand; what can we say of the greatness of Him who formed it?

The Argument from Design. We are living on this little globe which we call the earth, a mere atom in space, a tiny planet revolving around the sun in company with a number of other planets, some larger, some smaller. The sun is the centre of our

system, the giver of light and heat to all these planets, the luminary without which there would be no life on earth. It is indeed a giant orb, compared to our little globe; but it is far smaller than many of the stars, which are so immensely distant from us that they seem mere twinkling points of light.

And all of these are *in motion*. Our little earth spins on its axis in a day; it travels in an immense orbit around the sun in what we call a year; circling around the earth and accompanying it in its flight through space is the moon, its satellite. Revolving around the sun at various distances are the other planets, some much larger than our earth, some smaller; some with moons, some moonless; each planet and each moon completing its circuit in a certain time with absolute precision. And the sun, with all its attendant planets and their satellites, is itself in motion. Possibly it is journeying in an immense orbit around some other and greater sun, immeasurably distant.

Far away from our sun and from us are the stars, so distant that even the giant telescopes of the present day cannot magnify them. And each of them is a sun. The nearest is so distant that its light reaches us only after traveling for more than four years, although light moves at a velocity of more than 186,000 miles *in a second*. The distance which light travels in a year is called a light-year, nearly six million millions of miles. A recent development in astronomical instruments, the "interferometer" of Professor Michelson, gives us fairly accurate estimates of the distances and the sizes of the stars. Only four stars are known to be less than ten light-years from us. Vega and Arcturus, bright summer stars, are thirty light-years away, and each is about sixty times as bright as our sun. In the constellation of Orion is Rigel, a fairly bright star only, because it is almost 500 light-years from the earth; but it is really 13,000 times as bright as our little luminary. Betelgeuse, the "giant's shoulder," in the same constellation, has a diameter more than twice as great as the distance from our sun to the earth. The beautiful Mira, in the constellation Cetus, is still larger, and the ruddy Antares, glowing in the southern summer sky, is even more enormous in size. The

Pleiades, that pretty diamond-shaped cluster that gleams in the winter heavens, contains nearly 500 stars; it is 325 light-years from us, and the light that travels from one end of this tiny group to the other takes more than thirty years to make the journey.

Great as these distances are, the objects mentioned are really *our near neighbors*. Beyond them the stars stretch away in countless numbers. Photographs of the denser parts of the Milky Way show tiny stars crowded together like the sand of the seashore. In the constellation Hercules there is a cluster of globular form which contains 35,000 stars as bright as our sun, and some more than a thousand times brighter. The light of that cluster, which we see faintly to-day through a telescope, began its journey 36,000 years ago. And in the southern hemisphere are the "Magellanic Clouds," an "island universe," apparently separated entirely from the stellar system around us, for the distance of the fainter of these clusters is estimated to be 120,000 light-years. How many miles would this be? A seven, followed by seventeen ciphers. Seven hundred quadrillions of miles.

Is this the end? No. There are even more distant objects in the remoter depths of space. In our northern constellation of Andromeda is the Great Nebula, faintly visible to the naked eye. Through the telescope it is a mass of stars and gaseous matter, elliptical in shape; in other words, it is a flat disc which we are viewing almost edgewise. In 1924 Dr. Edwin Hubble, using the giant 100-inch Mount Wilson reflecting telescope, made an estimate of the distance and size of this heavenly body, and the results are almost beyond belief. It is a universe in itself, apparently separated entirely from the galaxy or system of which our sun is a part. It contains *several thousand millions* of stars, and its diameter is probably equal to that of our whole stellar system, while its total light is one million times that of our sun. How far away is it? Six quintillions of miles, which means that the light which enters our telescope to-night began its journey nearly a million years ago.

What a puny thing, then, our solar system is, with its little

sun and its tiny planets, Neptune, the furthermost of them, being less than three billion miles away. Our sun and this earth of ours are mere pin points in space. Many of the stars may have mighty planets circling around them. We do not know. Some are double, two suns, slowly revolving around each other. Others are multiple, many suns in one system. There are clusters of suns, myriads of suns; the telescope shows them by millions; and as more colossal instruments have been constructed, with greater light-grasping and space-penetrating power, still other millions have come into view. Celestial photography reveals on the sensitized plate new worlds of stars so small or so distant that the mighty lenses of our telescopes fail to show them to our eye. A recent work, *The Depths of the Universe,* by George Ellery Hale, states that the stars known at the present day in our galaxy or stellar system, not considering the many separated "island universes," may be estimated at perhaps two thousand millions. And, doubtless, we do not yet know—we may never know—the real extent of created things. There are probably other worlds, immensely distant from us. When we speak of quadrillions and quintillions we are using figures which do not present a real image to our little minds. These numbers are so enormous that we can form no adequate concept of their meaning.

But they are *not infinite.* The worlds around us may be millions of times larger than our sun, but nevertheless their dimensions are precisely as finite as those of a football. They may be quintillions of miles away, but that distance is just as finite as a yardstick. They may be so numerous that we are obliged to count them by millions, but there *is* a certain number of them, even though we shall never know exactly what that number is. All creation is finite; its Creator is not.

Having described the wondrous mechanism around us, let us continue our argument. That mechanism is moving. Who made it? Who set it in motion? Well, when we see any piece of machinery, large or small, in motion or not, we know by a process of reasoning that it did not come into existence of itself.

It had a *maker.* And if it is a wonderful and intricate mechanism, we know that its maker must have possessed knowledge and ability of high degree. If it is in motion, we know by the same powers of reasoning that the motion must have been imparted by some being or some force outside the machinery itself. For example, a watch is keeping accurate time. Why? Because a skilful artisan fashioned it, and some one wound the spring which turns the tiny wheels. Could these wheels and screws and bits of metal have come together of themselves, or by accident? Could that mainspring wind itself?

When we see a powerful railway-engine sweeping in its thunderous course along its iron track, drawing a heavy train at tremendous speed, do we not know that a cunning brain (or many brains) designed that colossal mechanism? Could we bring ourselves to believe, by any process of sane reasoning, that the wheels and rods and other parts dropped into their proper positions by accident, and began to move?

And yet this is just what certain so-called scientists have asserted concerning that tremendous machine which we have described, the universe. "The world came into existence through a fortuitous concourse of atoms," which, in simpler language, means that all the infinitesimal parts of matter which compose our earth and everything on and in it, our sun, the planets and the stars, happened to come together *by accident,* each falling into its proper place, and then they all began to move. Oh, the wonders of science!

These experts do not state where the atoms came from or how they began to exist. They do not explain what causes them to move according to fixed laws and with perfect accuracy after they have come together. What or who put them into such combinations that they are able to form all the various substances which constitute this universe of ours? What or who set them in motion and keeps them moving?

Let us take another example from man-made mechanism. Let us visit an astronomical observatory. Under a mighty dome stands a great telescope. The making of such an instrument

calls for a degree of skill, patience and painstaking care greater than that needed for any other mechanical work. The great lens, three feet or more in diameter, must be ground so accurately that every ray of light passing through it is brought to a focus-point perhaps fifty feet away. An error of one ten-thousandth of an inch in the curvature of the lens-surfaces would render the telescope useless. The giant tube, with its many complicated attachments, is so delicately balanced that, driven by powerful clockwork, it follows a tiny star, steadily and without tremor, hour after hour. The whole instrument is a wonderful product of the genius of man.

Do you or I believe—can any man believe—that this mechanism came into existence of itself? No; we know that the brain and hand of a Galileo fashioned the first telescope; that the genius of a Huyghens, a Herschel and countless others improved this marvelous aid to human knowledge; that clever artificers wrought the metal of the massive tube and shaped the lens-curves of the telescope's great eye. When we look through it, what do we see? Glimpses of the universe, a machine immeasurably greater than any product of human genius, far more wonderful in its construction, far more precise in its movements than aught that man could ever contrive; sun and planets and moons and stars, each pursuing its appointed course, each obeying certain fixed laws with unswerving precision. Such is the handiwork of God. Such is His creation, as it is displayed before us.

If we cannot believe that the watch or the engine made itself, how can we believe that the universe was without a Maker? If we know that the mechanism of brass, steel and glass which we call a telescope came into being through an intelligent cause, how can we doubt that the immensely greater and more perfect machine which it reveals to us had also an intelligent cause? We know that wisdom and ability of a high order were needed for the designing of the telescope. Can we doubt that the designer of the far-extending mechanism of this universe of ours is a Being of marvelous wisdom and power? This Being is the Creator of all things. He made the atoms,

or the ions, or the electrons—call them what you will—of which matter is composed. He united them in countless combinations. He made the laws according to which all matter exists and moves and acts. He is the ruler not only of this immense but finite universe of ours but of all things. This is the Being whom we call God.

Let me quote for you some words from the preface to a book bearing the simple title of *Astronomy,* by G. F. Chambers: "Over and above all, astronomy is a science which points unmistakably to the universe having been created and being still maintained by a divine hand which controls everybody and everything around us. It was no poetical fancy which inspired Young, in his *Night Thoughts,* to write the significant words: 'An undevout astronomer is mad.' "

There are other arguments based, like the foregoing, on reason alone; arguments that are deeper, more philosophical, more difficult of comprehension, and (it may be) less evident, of less convincing power. They need not concern us here. The fact that the universe exists and has existed for ages; that it could not have come into existence of itself; that it is composed of myriads of colossal worlds, each following its appointed course in obedience to laws which manifest the infinite wisdom of the lawgiver—all this constitutes the most cogent proof that there is a Being without beginning and without end, who is all-wise, all-powerful, all-good, and who formed all these things out of nothing. They had a beginning; He had none. They will have an end; He will never cease to be. They are finite; their Creator is infinite. They are the works of His hands, the stars of heaven, this earth of ours, and all that the stars and the earth contain. We are His creatures, placed here by Him, that we may do His will. We are "to know him, and love him, and serve him," for He is our God.

Chapter II

UNITY AND TRINITY

THERE is One God. God is present everywhere; He is infinite in perfection, infinite in power; and the very notion of omnipresence and of infinite perfection and power precludes the possibility of plurality or division in the Godhead. Let us see why this is so.

Immensity, extending everywhere, does not permit of another immensity of the same nature. Infinite perfection would not be infinite if it were possessed by more than one being. Infinite power means that that power has no limit; and so much power cannot be possessed by two or more beings, for the power of one would be restricted by that of the other or others. If a king has *absolute* power over his kingdom, how can we conceive of another king in the same kingdom endowed with equally absolute power? The terms imply a contradiction. Neither king would have power over the other, and hence, evidently, the power of neither would be absolute; it would necessarily be limited by that of the other. This is so evident and so logical that, even among pagan races, where religion has become corrupted and where many gods are honored, we find always a supreme god presiding over the other deities.

The Name of God. God cannot be comprehended by any creature. Neither can He be adequately named. But He has given Himself a name, that men may be able to speak of Him and to Him. To Moses He revealed Himself as "I am who am," "He who is," emphasizing the fact that He exists forever. This, in Hebrew, is *Yhvh,* or *Yahveh* (often written as "Jehovah"), a name held in such reverence by the Jews that they would never pronounce it. They substituted other names, such as

Adonai (Lord), *El* (the strong one) and *Elohim* (a plural word, signifying "ruler of all").

In other languages we find names for the Deity that express one or other of His attributes, the Latin *Deus,* the Greek *Theos* and the Gaelic *Dia,* all from an old Hindoo word signifying "to give light," and the *Gott* and *God* of the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon races, often explained as meaning "good," but more probably derived from a Sanskrit root expressing the idea of invocation or sacrifice.

The Attributes of God. God is eternal. He had no beginning. He will have no end. With Him nothing is really past or future; all is present. "A thousand years before thine eyes are as yesterday."

He is uncreated. *Creation* means the making of something from nothing. It is a power which belongs to God alone. If the Being whom we call God had been created, He would be a creature and not God.

He is immutable. He never changes. *Change* means alteration from one state to another. God is all-perfect. He cannot become less perfect, and He cannot become more perfect.

He is infinite and omnipresent; that is, there is no limit or bound to His perfections, and He exists everywhere. If He created a new universe, or a thousand of them, He would be present in each and all of them as really as He is in ours. He is here with me as I write and there with you as you read, just as truly as He is in heaven. "If I shall take my wings in the morning and dwell in the farthest limits of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand hold me."

He is the Lord of all things, the Master of heaven and earth. He is the supreme good. He is the eternal and essential truth; there is not and cannot be aught of error in Him. He is all-just and all-merciful. His mercy has given us the right to receive reward if we serve Him well; His justice will exact vengeance if we use our free will to deny Him and disobey Him. He is all-powerful, supremely omnipotent. He can do all things; nothing can resist His will. He is the source and

centre of all power and authority. "Without me you can do nothing."

He is love. He is infinite holiness. On account of His love He made us in His image, and then became incarnate that He might redeem us. We imitate what we love and admire; and if we return love for the love which He has manifested towards us, we ourselves are thereby made holy.

The Triune God. Let us now pass to the consideration of the Most Blessed Trinity, the first and the greatest of the mysteries of our Christian faith.

In God there are three divine persons, absolutely and really distinct from one another. They are equal in power and majesty and in all other divine perfections; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

God is not three and one in the same sense. The three persons are not one Person, the one God is not three Gods. But in the one God there are three persons. Each of these is God; each possesses the divine nature, absolutely and completely, without division. And still there is but one divine nature, one God.

Well may we call this the first and greatest of the Christian mysteries. Our intellect cannot fathom it. We cannot explain or attempt to explain how it can be true; for there is no analogy, no comparison in all our experience, which would serve as a basis of such an explanation. It seems to imply a contradiction, but we know that it does not. We accept it as truth because God has revealed it to us. Our reason recognizes that His authority is an ample guarantee that there are really three persons in God. It makes it a certainty. The proofs of that revelation will be cited further on in this chapter.

The Three Persons. They are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The fact that the Second Person is called the Son and the Third the Holy Ghost does not imply on their part any inferiority or inequality as compared with God the Father. In the words of the Athanasian creed, "As the Father is, so is the Son, so is the Holy Spirit." Each of them is uncreated, each is immense, eternal, omnipotent. Each of them

is God. "The Father is made by none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding."

What do these words mean? Let us explain them in so far as they are capable of being explained. The terms which we must use are necessarily inadequate. We are treating of a mystery which we could not have known at all if God had not revealed it to us, and which we cannot really explain after He has revealed it, but which we know to be true because it has been taught to us by Him.

By an infinite act of His intellect God the Father begets, conceives and brings forth His only-begotten Son, "the brightness of his glory and the figure of his substance," and this act of generation is from all eternity to all eternity. We must use this imperfect human analogy to tell of the relation of the Son to the Father; imperfect indeed, for in human parentage the son is inferior to the father in point of age at least; the nature of the son is not the *same* nature as that of the father, but only a nature of the same kind; and human generation requires the co-operation of a mother as well.

On account of the fact that He is begotten of the Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is called God the Son. In the language of Holy Writ He is also entitled "the eternal Word." Why? A *word* is the means of manifesting an idea conceived in the mind; the Second Person of the Trinity is conceived, as it were, to be the outward expression of the mind of His Father. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Why is the Third Person of the Trinity known as the Holy Spirit, or God the Holy Ghost? Because by an infinite act of the will God the Father and God the Son conjointly and as an expression of their mutual love send forth the Holy Spirit, from all eternity and to all eternity. He is not begotten by the other two persons of the Blessed Trinity; He *proceeds* from them. The infinite love of God the Father for His only-

begotten Son and of God the Son for His eternal Father produces a third divine Person, God the Holy Ghost. In Him infinite love is consummated. He is the very breath of God, which is the meaning of the word *spirit*. He proceeds by divine love, which sanctifies; hence He is called holy.

The word *ghost* has come to have a somewhat different meaning from *spirit*, signifying rather a graveyard apparition than a bodiless intelligence; but the title *Holy Ghost*, as the name of the Third Person of the Trinity, is sanctioned by long usage. He is also called the Paraclete (the comforter or consoler), because He is considered "by appropriation" as the sanctifier of souls.

What does this mean, "by appropriation"? It signifies that although the three persons are really equal in all things certain works are ascribed separately to each of them. To God the Father we ascribe *power;* to God the Son, *redemption;* to God the Holy Ghost, *sanctification*. Therefore God the Father is looked upon as the Creator, God the Son as the Redeemer, God the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier.

The Proofs. How can we show that this mystery of the Holy Trinity is a part of God's truth? It was not known to the Jews, the "chosen people" of God under the old law, although there are hints and traces of it in the Old Testament. To us, under the new law, the revelation of this great mystery has been given, a foretaste, as it were, of that more perfect knowledge of God which we shall have in that blest abode where we shall "see him as he is."

It is in the Gospels that this marvelous doctrine is first made manifest. Our blessed Saviour, incarnate for our redemption, had gathered around Him twelve Apostles. He taught them to recognize Him as the eternal Son of God. When His earthly life was drawing to a close He promised that His Father would send another divine Person, the Holy Spirit, in His place. And finally, after His resurrection, He revealed the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity in clear and unmistakable terms: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

All through the Gospel we find additional texts, showing that in God there are more persons than one. Some of them affirm the divinity of the Saviour; for example, the confession of St. Peter: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," and the declaration of our Lord at the court of Caiphas, affirming His divinity. The Gospel of St. John was written for the very purpose of teaching that Jesus Christ is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "That which my Father hath given to me is greater than all. . . . I and the Father are one."

The passages showing the existence of the Holy Ghost as a distinct personality are few, but sufficient. Listen to St. Luke: "The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you shall say" (xii. 12). That Holy Ghost is a Person distinct from the Father and the Son; for our Lord said to His Apostles: "When the paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, who proceedeth from the Father, he will give testimony of me" (John xv. 26).

In the other books of the New Testament there are numerous texts, too many to permit of enumeration here, showing how clear and definite was the belief of the early Church in the existence of three divine persons. For example, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all"—such is the prayer of St. Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians.

We shall not be able to consider in detail the proofs derived from what we call tradition; that is, from the teaching of the Church throughout the centuries of her history. Suffice it to say that in the "acts of the martyrs," in the earliest baptismal formulas, in the doxologies, in the writings of the great fathers and doctors of the Church, and in the decrees of popes and councils from the earliest days of Christianity to the present time, we find a continuous and uniform expression of the living faith of the Church in the wonderful mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. That doctrine permeates all her worship. Every time that we recite the Creed we profess it, every time that we pray we begin and

end our prayers with the sign of the cross, expressing our belief in the unity and trinity of the Godhead; for we touch the forehead, saying: "In the name of the Father," for He is the head of the Blessed Trinity; then the hand comes down in a straight line to the breast, with the words "and of the Son," for the Son came down from heaven to earth for us; then we cross this line (which we have drawn, as it were, between the Father and the Son) with another line from the left to the right shoulder, saying "and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," for the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. And the doxology, repeated so often in the Divine Office (which is the public daily prayer of our Church) and in every decade in the rosary of the Blessed Virgin, is a prayer of the Church offering homage to the triune God: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Chapter III

CREATION

The Creator. "God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things." Such is the language of the Catechism, short and simple, but expressing a most important truth.

From all eternity God had reigned alone. He needed nothing. He was infinite in happiness, in perfection, in glory. Nevertheless, in the abundance of His love He determined to create beings who should share in His happiness and reflect, in different degrees and measures, His own infinite attributes. And so, besides calling into being the blest abode which is known as heaven and the countless worlds which form our universe, He created two kinds of intelligent creatures, angels and men.

The Angels. These pure spirits were the first products of God's creative power. They are called "angels," which signifies "messengers," because at times they have brought messages from God to men. They are not encumbered, as we are, with a material and perishable body; but when they were sent by God to His servants in this world He gave them an appearance resembling our human form, that they might be visible to earthly eyes and able to use earthly speech.

They are endowed with intelligence of wonderful scope. They are of marvelous beauty and majesty, but they differ in rank and in duties. There are angels, archangels and principalities, who are protecting spirits, having respectively the care of souls, of dignities and of empires; each human soul has a guardian angel to watch over it and guide it. There are powers, virtues and dominations, ruling spirits, which control the elements and guard us against the powers of evil. There are thrones, cherubim and

seraphim, worshiping spirits, ministering to the Divine Majesty, adoring God forever.

God created them pure and holy. They were destined to enjoy eternal happiness in His presence, but they were subjected to a test or probation to prove their faithfulness. Nothing is known of the exact nature of this test; but many of the angels, led by Lucifer, rebelled against the majesty of God. They sinned, and, unlike us, there was for them no pardon. They became fallen angels or devils, filled with hatred of God and His elect; they who had been destined to be with God forever in heaven were cast into the flames of hell with their leader, no longer Lucifer, the light-bearer, but Satan, the arch-enemy, there to dwell for all eternity, enemies of God, seeking ever to seduce from Him the human souls which He has created and redeemed and destined to heaven.

The Creation of the World. The universe around us and the earth on which we dwell were created by God. That immense mechanism which is composed of uncounted millions of suns and attendant bodies, each moving harmoniously in its appointed orbit, came into being by an act of His all-powerful will.

The orbs that form what we call the stellar and solar systems are mostly of enormous size compared to the tiny planet on which we dwell. They are made of matter, lifeless, but endowed with motion. They influence and attract one another, although the distances which separate them are so tremendous that in many cases we have no means of computing them. Far away in the realms of space are giant suns, far larger and brighter than ours. The unaided eye shows us only a few thousand of these, but great telescopes have brought within our vision myriads of others, each an immense and glowing sun. The faint ray of light which reaches us from one of these remote members of our universe has been on its way for dozens or hundreds or thousands of years, although traveling at a speed which seems incredible. We know that these far-distant stars are not the end, the boundary of God's visible creation; for each advance in optical science has revealed other and more distant suns.

How did this countless host of worlds come into being? God

created it out of nothing. But He did not create it *as it is* in a moment, nor even in six of our days. He created matter; He set it in motion and subjected it to certain laws, and allowed it to develop during countless ages. The Biblical account of the creation mentions "six days" as the time occupied in this tremendous work, but the term is used only by analogy. These days are really distinct but indefinite periods, each of enormous duration. It may be that God revealed the creation to Moses in six visions, giving him an idea of the successive steps through which the universe passed in its orderly development.

The "Nebular Hypothesis." We can hardly doubt that our solar system, that is, our sun and its attendant planets and their satellites, is the result of a process of development extending through untold ages. It is probable that there has been similar action in the stellar system as well, among the millions of other suns, which may have their planets as ours has; but of these far-distant luminaries we know little except that they exist. In the system of which our earth forms a part, a tiny system when we compare it with the whole extent of the visible universe, the forces of nature were undoubtedly at work upon its materials for ages upon ages, slowly modeling them into the shape appointed for them from the beginning by the omnipotent wisdom of God.

There is a theory, and remember that it is only a theory, possibly true or partly true, possibly entirely false. It is known as the "nebular hypothesis." It was originated more than a century ago by Laplace, an eminent scientist, who based it upon certain conjectures of the German philosopher Kant; it has been considerably modified in later years by Faye, Newcomb and other men of science.

Briefly, the nebular hypothesis is as follows: Many ages ago our sun was immensely larger than it is to-day. A glowing atmosphere or nebula surrounded it, extending into space beyond the track on which the farthest planet travels now, but there were no planets then, simply a great flattened mass of fiery gas surrounding the sun and slowing revolving with it. As it cooled, it contracted; as it contracted, it spun faster. After a time this

increase in the speed of rotation caused the separation of a nebulous ring which continued to revolve with increasing rapidity until it finally broke up into fragments, which (by the attraction of gravity) came together and formed a single revolving and rotating body, a planet. As the parent mass continued to shrink and to increase its speed, other rings were detached in turn, forming new planets nearer the centre of the system. From some of these as they revolved, smaller rings were separated, and moons or satellites resulted, each moving around its parent planet.

An ingenious theory, but is it true? Is this the way in which our sun and the planets, including our earth, were formed? We do not know. Recent investigations have shown many things which seem to conflict with the hypothesis of Laplace.

The "Planetesimal Theory." There is another scientific thesis, much more recent, and supported by some eminent authorities of the present day. It is called the planetesimal theory, and is substantially as follows:

When the sun was a great gaseous globe, the near approach of some other mighty body caused a distortion and disruption of its substance; the powerful attraction of that passing body tore away a mass of matter, forming one or more planets. In this manner, through successive near-collisions of celestial bodies, the various members of our solar system, with their satellites, were formed.

Is this true? Again, we do not know. In my opinion, this theory is far less probable than that of Laplace. We know of no near approaches of celestial bodies; the distances between them, at least in our era, are so immense that the disruption of one by another is impossible. This modern theory would require not merely one such approach but many; and we have no proof whatever that any such phenomenon ever occurred.

We have stated above that there are various details in our solar system that seem to conflict with the nebular hypothesis of Laplace, but there are many other things that seem to confirm it. Nearly all the bodies of our system, the sun, the planets and their satellites, rotate on their axes and follow their orbits uniformly (with a few unimportant exceptions) from west to east.

Encircling Saturn is an immense flat ring, probably composed of thousands of tiny moons, and suggesting the disc-shaped mass which Laplace's theory presupposes. Around the sun, and visible at a total eclipse, is the mysterious "corona," apparently a lens-shaped gaseous mass, again suggesting the Laplacian idea. While the planets pursue their paths at various angles (not in the same plane), we find none of them traveling around the sun so as to cross its poles; the *general* direction of their orbits is more or less parallel with the sun's equator. And far off in space, amid the countless suns that make up our universe, we find spiral nebulæ which suggest that in these distant parts of God's creation there are mighty forces at work slowly evolving planetary systems like ours in a manner not unlike that set forth in Laplace's theory. We know of double suns revolving around a common centre, and of multiple suns similarly moving in a complex system. We know that around some of the distant stars there are immense dark satellites which periodically obscure the light of the parent orb. Everywhere there is motion, everywhere there is *law*.

Whether our solar system came into being in the manner set forth in the nebular theory, or the planetesimal, or in some other hitherto unconjectured way, is really a question of no great moment. *God made it.* He could have made is *as it is,* if He had so willed. But it is in no way opposed to the Christian idea of the omnipotence of God to suppose that, unnumbered ages ago, He created matter, set it in motion, and allowed it to develop according to laws which He had made; and that, in the solar system and in the minute globe which we call the earth, this development continued until this planet had become fit to be the abode of living organisms, of vegetable, animal and human life.

The Creation of Living Things. "And God said: Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which may have seed in itself upon the earth. And it was so done"—the work of the third creative day. Later on, in the fifth day, He "created the great whales and every moving creature which the waters brought forth, according to their kinds, and every winged fowl, according to its

kind." Gradually the types of animal life evolved, from the simpler to the higher organisms. "God said: Let the earth bring forth living creatures in its kinds, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth, according to their kinds. And so it was done."

In these simple words the sacred Scriptures describe the creation of vegetable and animal life on this planet of ours. Are we allowed to believe that all these things came to their present state through a long process of development or evolution? Yes. Our Catholic faith allows the greatest liberty of interpretation in regard to the narrative of Genesis concerning the creation of the material world. We are not obliged to believe that the "six days" of creation were six of our days. We need not even hold that the development of the various forms of life took place in the exact order mentioned by Moses. St. Augustine, in his commentary on the Book of Genesis, states that the account of the six days does not necessarily depict the real order of creation or development, but only the logical order; that it is a general view of the formation of created things.

We are allowed, then, to believe that all these things went through a process of evolution which required a very long time, for the process was slow. Geology demonstrates, clearly enough, that it extended through long ages. The "days of creation" were of varying and uncertain length. Many attempts have been made to harmonize "the testimony of the rocks" with the account of the creation as given by Moses; but the purport of the first chapter of Genesis is evidently to show that "God is the creator of heaven and earth and all things." Both the sacred narrative and the geologic strata demonstrate that life on earth began with the simplest forms of plant organism, that it evolved and developed into higher ones, and that these were followed by various forms of animal life, from the lower to the higher, the water-creature, the winged fowl, and then the four-footed beasts.

Finally God placed on this globe the being whom He had planned to be "a little lower than the angels"—a being with a spiritual and immortal soul. He created *man*.

Chapter IV

THE SOUL OF MAN

WE are members of the human race, of mankind, the highest and most perfect genus of animals. Are we animals only? No. "Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God." Such is the teaching of our faith, as expressed in the simple words of the Catechism.

Man is a creature, indeed; but he is superior to all the other beings which inhabit this earth. He has a body which is perishable, like that of other animals, because it is composed of material elements; but, unlike all other earthly beings, he has a spiritual and immortal soul.

The life-principle of all other living things is either vegetative, as in plants—for they feed and grow and reproduce—or sensitive, as in the lower animals, which can perceive and have an appetite for material things. Man has more than the plant and the animal. He has a spirit which we call his soul, the principle by which he lives and feels and thinks and wills; a soul that is "intellective," as the theologians say, because it possesses understanding and free will.

Created by God. The soul of man is a spirit created directly and immediately by God. Your soul or mine is not derived from our parents, for a spirit cannot be produced by natural generation. It was formed independently, out of nothing, by the omnipotent power of the Creator, and by a special act and exercise of that power.

Think of the hundreds of millions who are living on this earth of ours, of the countless generations which have preceded us, and of the myriads yet to come. The soul of each of these has

been, or will be created by a separate and distinct and independent act of God. Your body, material and perishable, came into existence in obedience to natural laws made by God; but your soul, which uses that body as a temporary dwelling-place, was made out of nothing when that body began to exist.

That soul is "made to the image and likeness of God"—that is, it is a spirit, resembling its Creator in many ways. It is not material, it is a pure spirit, it is endowed with understanding and free will, and it is immortal. Like God, it will never cease to be.

Free Will. What is free will? It is a part of the very essence of our nature. It is the highest of all human powers. Man can take his choice between good and evil, between heaven and hell, between God and Satan.

If man lacked free will, he would simply do what he could not help doing. There would be no virtue and no vice, no sanctity and no sin. All our acts would be morally valueless. There would be no reward and no punishment. We should be on a level with the beasts that perish; for us there would be no hereafter.

It is a glorious privilege, this freedom of our will. It is, in a sense, a participation in the almighty power of God. Well has it been said: "God's will created heaven and earth; and the human will is able to create a heaven or a hell."

Immortality. The fact that the human soul will never die is the very foundation of religion. God has destined us to live forever; that life will be spent in eternal bliss or in unending woe.

How do I know this, that my soul is immortal? How do I know that it will survive the perishable body, and will not pass into nothingness when the body dies, as do the so-called souls or life-principles of plants and beasts?

A thing may cease to exist in two ways, either by being decomposed into the parts or elements of which its essence consists, which is the case with all material beings, living or not; or because the substance or support which is needed for its existence is taken away, just as a painting perishes when its canvas is destroyed. This second way explains the reason why the souls or life-principles of plants and beasts do not survive their bodies. Such a

soul absolutely depends for its existence on the body to which it was united; when the latter ceases to live the vegetable or animal soul cannot exist without it and, therefore, dies.

But the soul of man differs from these. It cannot cease to live in either of these two ways. It is not material, not composed of parts. It is independent of any organism. It does not *need* a body, although it can use it. It did not come into existence through bodily generation, and it does not depend on a body in order to live. In other words, it was created by God to dwell for a time within a material human body, and to use the organs and senses of that body for the outward exercise of its faculties; but when that body becomes unfit for any further use, the soul leaves it. The body becomes lifeless, and is speedily resolved into its material elements; but the soul continues to exist, for it is immortal.

How We Know. We can know this, to a great extent, by human reason. In every heart there is a natural desire for an endless life, for happiness beyond this world, and for future justice for all. In every land and in every creed we find a belief, constant and uniformly expressed, in a future life, as is shown by the rites and ceremonies at the burial of the dead. As Chateaubriand says, "Does the beast know its grave? Is it concerned about its ashes? Does it care for the bones of its parents? Among all created beings, man alone gathers up the ashes of his kind and treats them with religious respect. Whence comes this idea? Because a secret voice whispers to us that all is not over with them, that the sleep is not lasting, and that death is a glorious transformation."

Catholic Philosophy. The following is a summary of the line of argument set forth by Catholic philosophers concerning the immortality of the human soul: That soul is a simple, individual, spiritual being. It is incorruptible. It is really independent of matter, though it may exert itself through a bodily organism; but the destruction of this material machine which we call the body, to which the soul is united for a time, does not and cannot bring about the destruction of the soul.

A human soul cannot cease to exist unless God should so will, which He could do if He wished. No other power can kill a soul; for God made it a spirit, not composed of parts or of matter. God will not kill or annihilate it. This would be against His wisdom; He would not have made it incorruptible, capable of living forever, unless He wished it never to die. It would be against His providence to give us a desire for perfect and perpetual happiness and then make it an illusion. It would contradict His justice if He did not provide for a future life in which virtue, often unrewarded here, would obtain its recompense, and vice, unpunished here, would meet with its deserved penalty.

The Human Mind. All created things are governed by law and uniformity throughout. Now the human mind, which means the intellectual powers of the soul, the principle by which it thinks and judges, reveals in its characteristics a purport which can be realized only by a conscious life after death. My mind is capable of looking back into the indefinite past, and forward into the distant future. Of what use would this quality be, if for me there were no future beyond this transitory life? My mind has in its very nature the impulse to project itself in imagination beyond the limits of space and time, to conceive the idea and the hope of eternal existence. There is in it a yearning for knowledge, a constant seeking for truth. There is a craving of my will for happiness, not temporary or imperfect, but eternal and complete, and this cannot be appeased by any temporal joy; it can be satisfied only by eternal life and eternal bliss. And these it can receive, for its Creator has endowed it with *immortality*.

There is in every human mind the consciousness that duty performed will deserve and obtain a fitting reward, that duty neglected will merit and receive chastisement; it would be irreconcilable with the idea of the moral government of the world by a just and infinite God if vice were to be rewarded and virtue punished, if the violator of every law of God were to have happiness here and no retribution hereafter, and if the faithful servant were to endure suffering in this life and have no prospect of reward in a life to come. We all know that such a state of

things, if it were true, would be unjust, and God is infinite justice.

Conscience, by its urging to do the right and avoid the wrong, by its reward of peace of mind for good done, and by its penalty of remorse for evil, points clearly to an unending hereafter, an eternal life to come, where God will reward the good with everlasting happiness and punish the wicked with endless torments.

If there be no future life, of what use is a conscience? Why should we concern ourselves when it warns or threatens? If our existence ends with this earthly life, why trouble ourselves about right or wrong? God has endowed the soul of man with a conscience, capable of distinguishing between good and evil. He has put into that soul a knowledge, a consciousness, that a future state exists in which there will be reward and punishment, where right will be rewarded and wrong will be punished. And because He has given us this knowledge and this guiding principle of action which we call conscience, we know on His authority that this knowledge is correct, that this conscience is a true guide; we know with certainty that reward will be given for good and punishment for evil in a life hereafter, which will begin when our earthly life is over. We know also that that future life will have no end; that our souls will live forever, because they cannot be destroyed by any being but God, who created them incorruptible spirits, incapable of decay or dissolution; and we know that He will not destroy them, because He destines them to be happy with Him for all eternity.

But our faith in life everlasting depends especially on the fact that it has been revealed to us by God, and that it is guaranteed by His authority and by the miraculous history of the Christian religion. The details of that revelation will be the matter of future chapters.

Life Everlasting. Let us try to realize the meaning of "the immortality of the soul." You and I are to live forever. Only a few years ago we did not exist. Then, by the omnipotent power of God, we were formed out of nothing. We began to live, and that life will never end. The body, the temporary tenement of the soul, will die; it is made "of the slime of the earth," and to

earth it will return; but the soul will continue to live. Everything else around us will pass away. This little earth on which we live will grow old and wither away, and circle through space a dark and lifeless globe, and finally cease to be. The sun will grow cold, the stars will lose their light; for all these things, great and wonderful as they seem to be compared to us, were created for time, not for eternity. But the soul of man will never die, never change. When time shall be no more, while the ages of eternity roll by, *we shall live;* and the unspeakable happiness or the unutterable misery of that unending life will depend on one thing only: how we have served God during the few years of our earthly life. If we have been unfaithful servants, unmindful of our eternal destiny, how can we expect a reward from the Master whom we have never served? But if we hearkened to the voice of conscience, that mentor which God has given to our souls to show us the right and the wrong, then indeed our eternity will be spent in His presence, in the enjoyment of His love, in the glory of heaven, in the possession of the beatific vision of God.

Chapter V

THEORIES OF EVOLUTION

THIS earth of ours, with the other members of the solar system, and, it may be, with all the millions of other orbs that make up our universe, probably came into existence, as we have already stated, by a process of development extending through long ages. Matter was created by God, and was set in motion according to the laws made by its Creator. Our globe gradually became solid, and its crust took its present form. The researches of geology show that it passed through various periods of indefinite duration, as follows: the azoic, meaning the time "without life," when there was no trace of living organism on earth; the primary, when vegetation began, with some forms of animal life; the secondary, the era of birds and enormous reptiles; the tertiary, when quadruped beasts appeared; and the quaternary, when *man,* the king of all earthly creation, was placed on this planet of ours, which had become fit to be his habitation.

Evolution. The exponents of modern science have advocated various theories regarding the manner in which life, in all its myriad forms, came upon earth. All these theories, though they differ considerably one from another, are usually designated by the name *evolution.* Among the better known are those of Darwin and of Haeckel; the former attempts to explain the development of successive species of animals from one earliest form without discussing the question of their creation by a supreme Being, and the latter has turned Darwinism into rank materialism, a denial of God, for it refuses to accept Him as the first cause of created things.

What is evolution? As a scientific theory, it seeks to determine the succession of various species of plants and animals on our earth,

and to show how in the course of the different geological epochs they gradually evolved from their beginnings by purely natural causes. By this theory, then, the present species of vegetable and animal life were not directly created by God, but are the final result of an evolution from earlier species.

This is evolution in its simplest and least objectionable form. It does not deny the existence of an all-wise Creator of all things. Is this theory tenable? Yes, tenable, but still extremely doubtful, because it is based almost entirely on assumptions, with few proofs that are tangible and fewer that are really of scientific value.

It is possible, even probable, that there has been in this world a series of successive steps in the progress of life from the lower to the higher. It is possible, but extremely improbable, that any one species evolved into another. The earth itself was developing, was changing its condition; and when animal life had once been created, it is not unreasonable to suppose that new forms appeared as the earth became fit for higher and more perfect kinds. But the great divisions of animal life which we call species were probably not produced by evolution from earlier forms; at least, there is no sufficient evidence in nature that any distinct species can take its origin from a totally different species.

"Spontaneous Generation." Let us go back to the time when there was nothing of what we call organic creation, when everything was lifeless. Then life began; vegetation spread over the earth. But whence did that vegetable life come? Not from lifeless rocks and sand. Nor was it produced by what the evolutionists term "spontaneous generation"; there is not a vestige of such a process in nature, and there never has been.

Listen to Virchow, an eminent scientist and an unbeliever: "There is not a single positive fact to show that an inorganic mass has ever been transformed into an organic one. . . . If I do not wish to believe in the existence of a Creator, it is necessary, willingly or unwillingly, to come to the conclusion: I admit spontaneous generation. But we have *no proof* of it; no one has ever seen a spontaneous generation of organic matter."

Following vegetation, animal life came upon earth. How? Did

it develop from vegetables? And as successive varieties appeared, did they evolve one from another, from the mollusc to the fish, to the reptile, to the bird, and finally to the mammal, including the somewhat man-like ape? Did each new and higher species spring from an older and lower one? Let us reason it out.

The successive appearance of beings on earth is a fact; first the inorganic or lifeless, then plants, then animals, and then *man*. And the teachers of evolution tell us that the later forms of being are derived directly from those that went before.

As long as the world has been a world, there has been no evidence to attest the passage or progress of one kind of living creatures to another kind. We find around us living things in endless variety. Geological excavations show us the fossils of these, and of many varieties now extinct; but neither in our world of to-day nor in the strata of bygone ages do we find any "middle forms," any "missing links," which would denote the evolution of one species into another. The shellfish has always remained a shellfish, producing its own kind, not a different kind; from the egg of the eagle another eagle is hatched. There is no reliable evidence whatever of any process in nature whereby one distinct species is transformed into another.

We know, of course, that a species of animals, once created, may develop; but the species does not change. The horse of prehistoric times was a small, deer-like beast, far inferior in size and strength to the useful animal of our day; but he was really a horse. The dog, originally like a jackal, has been modified by selective breeding into numerous varieties, but he remains a dog. It is possible, in certain cases, to produce a hybrid, the offspring of animals of different species, such as a mule; but the hybrid does not perpetuate itself. The influence of surroundings has caused the extinction of many species, the mighty dinosaur, the mastodon, and the gigantic flying reptiles of ages long past. As the climatic conditions of the earth changed, it became fit to be the dwelling-place of new species; but there is no proof thus far, from geological or other sources, that these new species were evolved from earlier ones. We do not deny the possibility of such

evolution; but we prefer to believe, until convinced to the contrary, that God created these new varieties of beings directly, designed them to be denizens of the water and air and land, and gave to each the form and the members needed for the maintenance of life amid its surroundings.

There are some Catholic scientists who favor the theory of an evolution of zoological species inferior to man. These, however, maintain that the original "grand divisions" of living things were created by God, who made laws for their gradual change into higher forms or species of the same division.

The Vagaries of "Science." Let us give a general idea of the teachings of the unbelieving scientists of our day. They tell us that man is the last step in an indefinite series of evolutions and transformations. They assert that the first living thing, which they call protoplasm, was formed by "spontaneous generation," which means that life began of itself, that the lifeless matter which had existed thus far suddenly became alive. This unaccountable life then began to develop and transform itself, gradually evolving into myriads of vegetable forms; then (again in some unaccountable way) these changed themselves into animals; and then these developed from the lower to the higher forms—and that finally they evolved into *man,* whose nearest ancestors were the animals most resembling him in bodily structure.

Hence, according to these "beacon lights of science," we members of the human race, endowed with intelligence, animated with lofty ideals, possessing immortal souls, are the offspring of the ape, and have as our more remote forebears the lizard and the jellyfish. Men who are apparently intelligent are teaching and professing to believe these things; a great part of what they teach is without adequate proof, and the rest is arrant nonsense. It is set before our youth in schools and colleges, not as a dubious theory, but as an indisputable fact. Everything in human life is explained as a development from animalism. Immature minds are easily deluded by the presentation of specious "proofs," some of which we shall consider later. This debasing idea of the origin of man is incredible when we consider that God created him to be "a little

lower than the angels," to be the most perfect of earthly beings, the ruler of all others, superior to all because he possesses not only an animal body but a spiritual and immortal soul.

The Question of Human Evolution. Is it permitted to apply the theory of evolution to man? Was he evolved from lower forms of animal life? We know and believe that the soul of man, being a spirit, was created by a direct act of God. But what of man's body, which so resembles the bodies of some other animals, which has organs and senses, bones, nerves and muscles much like theirs? Was it created by God as it is, or was it developed through long ages by successive steps from other forms of life?

Let us say, first of all, that it is not *impossible* that God should have made use of natural and evolutionary causes in the production of man's body. The idea is not a recent one; St. Augustine suggested it, back in the fifth century. But the actual proofs to support the idea are absolutely lacking; and the discussion of the alleged proofs, of the "missing links" and the "ape-men," will form our next chapter.

Chapter VI

THE CREATION OF MAN

WE have seen that it is probable that the solar system, of which our earth is a part, came to its present condition through some process of development extending through long ages. It is possible that the same is true concerning the other and more distant orbs of the universe, the "fixed stars," because they are suns like our sun; but in regard to these, because they are immensely distant from us, we know little except that they are made up largely of the same elements (carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, iron, etc.) that are present in our luminary and its planets.

We have seen that, while it may be possible that living beings developed from simple forms into more complex varieties, it is by no means probable, because there is practically no trace in animated nature of a transformation of one species into another.

How Man Came on Earth. The highest of living creatures dwelling on this planet is *man*. He is composed of a material part and a spiritual part; that is, he has not only an animal body but a spiritual and immortal soul, which is endowed with understanding and free will.

What was his origin? Did he evolve from brute ancestors, or was he created as we see him now, a perfect man, by a direct act of God? Did the multitude of men who are living or who have lived in this world descend from a tribe of animals? Or are they the descendants of a single set of parents, Adam and Eve, whom God created independently of all other living beings?

"Scientific Superstition." The Catholic Church, as we shall see, has a definite attitude on this matter, and so have the opponents of Catholic truth. Those who are rightly called "the in-

tellectual victims of scientific superstition" have compiled a mass of absurdities based upon alleged "proofs" which prove nothing. They attempt to demonstrate that the human race has reached its present condition through an evolution or development from brute ancestors, that mankind has existed on this planet for hundreds of thousands of years; that beings which were "ape-men," hairy bestial monsters, lived here and there on our globe, and that from them our species has been directly evolved, with a more remote ancestry going back to the long-tailed monkey, and perhaps to the reptile and the shellfish. What a wonderful family tree is thus outlined for the "lords of creation!"

Well has it been said that "evolutionary science is flimsy phantasia, unsupported assertions, clumsy inconsistencies, physics without law, mathematics without numbers, deductions born in fraud and perjury." Truly a scathing arraignment, but not more so than evolutionary science deserves.

You, dear reader, have possibly seen some striking portraits of "our simian ancestors," or of the "ape-men" who are alleged to be the connecting link between these brute progenitors and ourselves. Our museums exhibit casts and waxworks of incredible ugliness which purport to represent the forefathers of our race as they were hundreds of thousands of years ago. The textbooks used in our leading universities and schools teach the same doctrine by word and by picture, without ever admitting that the doctrine is based upon the flimsiest foundation and that the pictures are merely fanciful. Our young people are gravely informed that modern science has absolutely demonstrated the animal evolution of man, and that the Biblical account of man's origin is childish and unworthy of credence by enlightened minds.

Let us see the foundations of this beautiful scientific edifice. They are not difficult to examine, because they are few in number.

"Tentative Men." Evolutionists have long ago despaired of linking man and monkey immediately, and so they have devised a "pre-simian, pre-anthropoid" stock, which means, in non-scientific language, a stock from which both monkey and man are supposed to have been derived. This wholly imaginary stock, in the jargon

of modern science, "evolved into monkeys and into anthropoid (manlike) apes. The main line gave off other experiments, the Java, Heidelberg and Piltdown man. These were tentative men, who had their day and ceased to be—our predecessors rather than our ancestors."

Here, then, is the present form of the evolution theory as applied to the human race: We and the monkey are collateral relatives only, distant cousins. We are not lineal descendents of the anthropoid ape (thank heaven!); but the stock which produced that variety of simian also produced certain predecessors of ours who did not resemble us much (thank heaven again!), and who must have been faulty in design, since they disappeared from the scene, unsuccessful experiments by mother nature. And then, in some unaccountable way, man appeared on the earth. How long ago? Oh, thousands and hundreds of thousands of years!

Such is a brief outline of the theory. What are the proofs? Here and there in the world, in mines or other deep excavations, fossilized bones have been found; and as scientists, quite arbitrarily, have assigned a certain age to each stratum of rock, such a layer being, according to them, 100,000 years old, and such another 200,000, they naturally claim that the being to which the bones belonged must have lived and died 100,000 or 200,000 years ago.

If they could show, beyond cavil, that the bones are human bones, that the rock-stratum is really 100,000 years old and that the bones are as old as the rock, then their argument as to the antiquity of man would be proven. If they could show that these bones belonged to a being who was evolved from an ape, a being somewhere between a gorilla and a man, their theory of the origin of the human race would be probably true.

And here are the "proofs." In Egypt they discovered a jawbone, and they promptly built it up into a fearsome monster who "was the progenitor of man and of anthropoid apes." At Trinil, in Java, and near Heidelberg, in Germany, they found some bones; and they "restored" them into an "ape-man," although the Java remains consisted of an ape's skull and a human thigh-bone, while the Heidelberg man is "one-half per cent of original jawbone

and ninety-nine-and-one-half per cent of restoration." At Piltdown, in England, in some deep excavations, they unearthed a fossilized fragment of a skull, probably human, and later a part of a jaw probably of a chimpanzee, and lo! they combined these and with artistic skill modeled another hideous forefather of our race. The oft-mentioned "Neanderthal man" is a skull probably of a man of rather recent times: a Celt, a Hollander or an idiot, according to different scientists; but the evolutionists have attached a face to it, and not a handsome face, either, and we have another ancestor, maybe 200,000 years old. An Australian skull, found at Talgai, is probably as old as 1848. A Rhodesian skull, possibly that of a woman, is alleged to be 100,000 years of age; but it was found in a cave which had a cleft roof, in the midst of animal bones probably of recent times. Some African lady evidently had a severe fall. Not long ago, in Patagonia, a "fossilized skull" was found, to which "experts" assigned an age of 1,000,000 years (an extra cipher presents no difficulty to them), but which, on more careful examination, proved to be merely an oddly shaped piece of stone. Besides these, there have been a few others, the "Cro-Magnon man" and various "discoveries" of similar nature and of equal value.

And this is absolutely all. These are the "proofs" upon which the modern "scientific theory" of human evolution is based, doubtful fossilized fragments dug up here and there in ancient strata or rock. And still our encyclopedias and textbooks teach it, not as a theory, but as a fact. Colleges and schools thus instruct their pupils. Books innumerable have proclaimed the same fallacies. We have *The Story of Mankind,* by Van Loon, *The Direction of Human Evolution,* by Conklin, and *A Short History of the World,* a recent work of H. G. Wells, who once wrote of octopus-like Martians who invaded this planet. It would seem that Mr. Wells has romanced quite as much in his *History* as he did in his fascinating and fantastic story.

What the Bible Tells Us. Our Catholic Church holds that the Bible is the errorless word of God. That revelation of His truth to men declares distinctly the *oneness of parentage* of man-

kind, that the whole human family is descended from one man, who was Adam.

In the Book of Genesis we are told of the creation of this first father of our race, of his solitary existence, of the formation of Eve, and, subsequently, of their children. "And the Lord formed man from the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. . . . And the Lord said: It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself. . . . And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. . . . And Adam called the name of his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living."

Take also the words of St. Paul to the members of the Athenian Areopagus: "And he hath made of one all mankind to dwell upon the face of the earth." All through the New Testament we are taught that our Lord Jesus Christ came to redeem those who fell through Adam. Man, by Adam's sin, had lost his original innocence and the right to eternal happiness; he was restored to his birthright through the Saviour. How clearly this is shown by St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians: "For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." And the same great truth is set forth in many other texts.

The Bible, then, teaches us that there was one father of the human race; that there was a fall, original sin, a need of redemption, and a Redeemer. If we refuse to believe in the oneness of parentage of mankind, if we affirm the evolution of man from brute ancestors, we cannot believe in the fall and the redemption; we deny Christ, we reject Christianity. All these fundamental doctrines of faith depend one upon another. If there was no Adam created in a state of innocence, there was no loss of that innocence, no fall. If there was no fall, there was no need of redemption. If there was no need of redemption, the One whom we look upon as the Saviour of the world was an impostor. His life and mission would be a lie, His religion would be a fantastic absurdity.

Therefore our Church teaches that God created Adam, who was the first of the human race, and from whom all mankind is descended.

The Catholic Teaching. What is the Church's stand upon evolution? Let us take it up step by step. She teaches us, first of all, that which we know from reason: that man has a soul which is spiritual and immortal and created directly by God. No Catholic can hold the evolution of the whole man from inferior animals, because the soul, being spiritual, cannot be evolved from an animal soul, but must be the result of a direct creative act of God.

What about man's body? Did this evolve from lower forms of life, or was it always essentially as it is now? Was mankind brought into existence from brute ancestors by a process which turned a breed of animals into men? No. The Catholic Church, basing her belief on the Scriptures, teaches us that the whole human race is descended from one pair of ancestors, Adam and Eve. No one who believes that the Bible is the word of God can hold that man came on earth by "tribal evolution" from inferior animals, and those who reject the Bible have proposed no real proof of such evolution.

What is the teaching of the Church regarding Adam's body? Was this originally the body of a superior kind of brute, a "sub-man," with an animal soul? Are we permitted to believe that God took this body and replaced its animal soul with a spiritual soul? No. The Catholic Church has a definite attitude towards this doctrine or conjecture, which has been put forward by certain writers. She *condemns it in the present state of evidence.* In other words, while such a method of creation of Adam is not absolutely impossible, our Church condemns the teaching of any such doctrine because she has no reasons for admitting the truth or even the probability of such origin of the human race on earth.

The Decision. The Biblical Commission, which has been engaged for some years in the study and interpretation of the Scriptures, forbids any doubting about the particular and direct creation of man or the formation of the first woman from the first man. Therefore it denies the animal ancestry of man, and asserts his

direct creation by God as narrated in Genesis. The Commission states that at the present time there is no evidence whatever to support the theory that the body of our first father was derived directly or indirectly from that of any inferior animal. As regards the decrees of this Commission, a Catholic is not to teach anything opposed to them; and the Holy See has ruled that anyone who combats these decisions, either verbally or in writing, "incurs the note of disobedience and temerity, and thus becomes guilty of a grave fault."

Here is a lucid summary of the Catholic position, by Father LeBuffe, S. J., in his pamphlet *Human Evolution and Science:* "The Catholic Church has an explicitly definite and official attitude on human evolution. Its attitude is condemnatory of the evolution of the whole man, of the tribal evolution of man's body, and finally of the evolution of Adam's single body from an animal ancestor. In brief, human evolution is condemned from science, from the Bible, from the Church."

Biblical Chronology. When did God create Adam? Was it about four thousand years before the time of Christ, or was it at a much more remote period? Here we might enter into a discussion that would be endless; we might give the opinions of countless "authorities," opinions which vary one from another, and which are mostly built on very unstable foundations. They give man an antiquity of from ten thousand to a million years, and the first number is probably near the truth.

We know that civilization had reached a high level in Babylonia and Egypt four thousand years before Christ. We know that the "lake-dwellings" of Switzerland may be far older than that. We know also that the varieties of mankind, the white, black and yellow races, have not been modified appreciably within historic times. How far back, then, must we go to find a time when all men were of one color? Traces of human workmanship, pottery, flint arrow-heads and other things, have been found in surroundings which show that there were men who made them and used them in far distant eras. How long ago were they made? To

these questions we can give no exact answers. What is to be said, then, of the age of our race as set forth in Holy Writ?

The first eleven chapters of Genesis present a general view of the early history of mankind, recording the creation of the world and of the first human pair, telling of the coming of evil into the world, describing the Deluge, accounting for the existence of separate nations, and giving the earliest history of the "people of God." The rest of the book deals with patriarchal history, telling of the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the great ancestors of the Hebrew nation.

The opening chapters describe the creation of the world, a figurative or somewhat poetical account, which is not intended to be a detailed historical narrative. Bearing this in mind, it is not difficult to account for many of the apparent discrepancies which appear in it, nor to reconcile its statements with the discoveries of modern science. It shows us that God produced this world of ours through a series of distinct operations, and it speaks of these as occurring within the space of "six days"; but evidently its intent and aim is to inculcate the doctrinal truth that God created the whole universe by successive acts of His infinite will.

Among the remains of the ancient literature of Babylonia and Assyria there is an incomplete story of the creation, a kind of epic poem, which shows a remarkable resemblance to the record of Genesis. Like the latter, it divides the history of the world's formation into seven successive periods, in which all created things were evoked from a watery chaos. These two accounts, the Babylonian and the Biblical, probably had a common basis in a tradition which was handed down from the very beginning of the world.

The "Six Days." We have already alluded, in the chapter on "Creation," to the fact that there are varying interpretations of the creative days mentioned in Genesis. The first pages of that book tell of the successive acts of the Almighty by which this universe of ours and all its contents were formed out of nothing, in "six days." In past ages the words of the Scriptural narrative were taken *literally,* that God created all the world in six days of twenty-four hours each; but there are few, at the present time,

who still cling to this "literal" theory. Geology and astronomy have demonstrated beyond the possibility of dispute that gradual change through almost infinite ages must have been the process which governed alike the evolution of sidereal systems, the moulding of the earth's crust, and the appearance of the animal and vegetable kingdoms upon its surface.

The literal theory of the six days of creation, then, cannot be maintained with any show of reasonableness or probability. A second theory appeared; and because it attempted to bring the Biblical account of creation into concord with the ascertained facts of science, it is called the *concordistic* theory. The "days" were vast periods in the formation and development of the earth; and as the inspired writer of Genesis wished to emphasize the analogy between the divine work of creation and the human six days of labor and one day of rest, he specified six of these lengthy periods and called them "days." This "concordistic theory" was an attempt to reconcile the words of Genesis with the scientific history of our earth; but there are numberless facts that are irreconcilable, if we maintain that the Book of Genesis was intended to be an exact historical account of the world's creation. Geological science shows us that animals and sundry vegetable forms existed in the very early epoch which is called the paleozoic age; that various trees spoken of in the Biblical narrative as having been created on the "third day" did not appear until a comparatively late period, known as the mesozoic age; and astronomy shows indisputably that this earth of ours was not created before the sun, since it revolves around that luminary and derives from it the light and heat which render it habitable.

Consequently, the "concordistic theory" did not work well. A third interpretation came into being, called the *"ideal theory."* It holds that the writer of Genesis did not intend to convey historical truth concerning the succession and duration of the vast periods when our world was gradually being evolved. He wished, as it were, to consecrate each day of the week to the remembrance of some work of the true God, to emphasize the fact that He alone

is the Creator of heaven and earth, and to teach the divine precept that man, after six days of labor, must rest on the seventh day.

Modern Catholic theologians mostly hold a theory which admits that the Biblical account of the creation agrees in many points with the history of the real development of the universe, and that, on the other hand, it deviates from it in many others, simply because it was not intended to be a historical or scientific description. God was not teaching science. He wished merely to show, by His written word, that this world and all that it contains came into being through the exercise of His supreme power, that the process of creation followed an ordered sequence, and that the coming of man marked the highest point in the marvelous work.

The Creation of Eve. The second chapter of Genesis tells of the forming of the first woman from a rib taken from the side of Adam. Is it necessary that we understand and accept this narrative literally? No. There are two opinions regarding it, among Catholic theologians. The greater number prefer to abide by the literal meaning of the words of Genesis; but there is another theory, ingenious and at least probable, which is held by many reputable scholars and dates back to the time of Origen. It is that in the Biblical account of the creation of Eve we have the record of a vision vouchsafed to Adam. Just as we read in other parts of the Scriptures of the prophetic vision granted to Abraham, and of that of St. Peter at Joppa, so (according to the proponents of this opinion) "the thoughts of Adam were turned powerfully to the absolute lack of companionship for him among birds and beasts; his attention was directed to the twofold character of the animals which made their lairs and built their nests together and wrought in mutual helpfulness, and his mind was made to dwell on his loneliness. Then deep sleep fell upon him, and he saw one of his ribs taken out by Yahweh (God), the place closed up with flesh, and a woman formed. He awoke. The woman whom he had seen in his sleep is brought to him, and, recognizing her, he exclaims: 'This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my

flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.'" (Davis, *Genesis and Semitic Tradition.*)

This view of the Biblical account of Eve's creation has never been censured by the Church. Consequently we Catholics may accept the words of Genesis in their literal sense if we wish, or we may hold the "vision" theory if we prefer it. We know that God created Adam; we know that a wife was given to the first father of our race; and we hold that from that man and woman are descended the myriad tribes that through many ages have peopled this world of ours.

The Age of the Human Race. The Book of Genesis tells us of the beginnings of mankind, but there are many difficulties when we consider its chronology. It describes, first of all, the period from the creation of the first man down to the Deluge, and computes the duration of this period by the lives of ancient patriarchs. It is certain that the respective dates of the creation and of the flood, as given there, cannot be accepted as being even close to the truth. The well-ascertained facts of the science of ethnography show us that the existence of distinct races and nations goes back long before the time of the Deluge according to Genesis, and geology sets back the creation of man to a date at least some thousands of years before that.

The opinion of Christian scholars and scientists at the present day is that the Bible indicates, in a measure subordinate to its divine scope, the chronological order of the facts which it relates; but it is not a detailed and precise chronology, a complete system of dates accurately indicated, methodically connected and perfectly preserved. Biblical data are insufficient to fix the date of man's creation; this falls naturally within the province of human sciences. Our Catholic faith does not in any way require us to believe that Adam lived only six thousand years ago.

In other words, the books of Scripture are not merely a history. In the lists of patriarchs recorded in Genesis it is practically certain that there are many omissions, and that dates and figures are given in "round numbers." Consequently, there is little doubt that the time which elapsed from Adam to the coming of the

Redeemer was far longer than the four thousand years of the Biblical chronology. Suffice it to say that, in the present state of our knowledge, there is nothing that shows clearly that man has existed more than 10,000 to 15,000 years.

Chapter VII

THE FALL OF MAN

OF the creatures of God, living and lifeless, the last in the order of creation was *man*. He contained in his body the elements of the lower forms of being, but his soul was a spirit, immortal, and endowed with understanding and free will. His body was created from "the slime of the earth"; and we have thus far no sufficient proof that it was not created directly and independently by God. It is made up of elements in various combinations, just as are the bodies of other animals, the vegetable kingdom and the lifeless things that constitute our world. Carbon, oxygen, iron, nitrogen and some other chemical elements form man's body; it is, therefore, perishable because elements, when combined, tend to disintegrate and revert to their simple forms. But man's soul is not thus compounded. It is immaterial, a spirit, not subject to corruption or decay. It is immortal.

Original Innocence. The first man was Adam, signifying "the earthborn"; to him, as we have seen, God gave a helpmate, Eve. There are great differences between the teachings of Catholic and Protestant theologians concerning the state in which our first father lived before his fall; therefore it will be well to set forth briefly our Church's doctrine regarding the original condition of Adam in the earthly paradise, for from it depends the whole system of Catholic theology concerning sin and redemption and the dealings of God with fallen man.

Adam was endowed at his creation with natural and supernatural gifts of marvelous value and dignity. In the order of nature he possessed a perfect human body, animated by a soul which had understanding and free will. Therefore, if he chose to

make a right use of his understanding, he could know God; if he chose to use his will rightly, he could love God as the giver of all natural good. If man had been created with these things and nothing more, he would have been subject to disease and death, like other animals, to ignorance and sensual passions, and he never could have hoped for heaven.

But God did not leave Adam in this natural state. He gave him even a greater gift, supernatural sanctifying grace. And through this gift Adam was able to believe in God not merely as He may be known by reason, but as He is known by the light of faith. He could hope in God, with an earnest desire to see Him face to face in a future life. He could love God "above all things, with his whole heart and soul," as the Catechism says, with the supernatural love which we call charity.

Moreover, this imparting of the gift of grace wrought a wonderful change in the natural powers of Adam. His body could not suffer, and could not die. Were it not for the disastrous fall, Adam and Eve and their descendants, after a life of unalloyed happiness in this world, would have been brought to heaven without death, to enjoy the eternal vision of God. Such would have been the destiny of our first parents. Such would have been our destiny as well, if they had not sinned. Well may we wish that they had remained faithful.

In the state of original innocence, as it is called, animal appetites could not rebel against reason. Our temptations often come from within; in Adam and Eve this was impossible. But they could be tempted from without; having free will, they could yield to such temptation, and they did. And thence came the fall.

The Earthly Paradise. God gave to our first parents a dwelling-place, the Garden of Eden. The site of this abode of short-lived happiness is very uncertain, and has been a topic of discussion and conjecture from the earliest times. Possibly it was near the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, in Western Asia, for the Book of Genesis speaks of these; but two other rivers mentioned therein are unrecognizable in modern geography. Wherever it was, it exists no longer. Eden is lost forever.

It was a place of earthly bliss. There could be for mankind no suffering, no disease, no death. All the other creatures of God were subject to man; he was indeed "the Lord of creation," far more truly than he has ever been since his fall. Adam's mind was enlightened to know the use and meaning of everything that he saw around him. He could give each its proper name. He knew all the laws that govern God's creation, the heavenly bodies and the things of earth. He knew the laws of grace, and the will of God concerning him and his destiny. And, greatest blessing of all, he had the privilege of seeing God in some visible form, and of speaking to Him, a wonderful foretaste of the more perfect vision which would be his lot in heaven.

The Temptation. God wished that man should exercise his noblest faculty, his free will; that he should show his fidelity to his Creator. He put Adam and Eve on trial. There were in Eden two trees of extraordinary virtue, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil; of the fruit of this latter tree they were forbidden to eat, "for in the day on which thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death." Without giving the reason why, God thus required the submission of their free will to the command of their Maker.

He allowed Satan, the arch-enemy, to tempt them. "By the envy of the devil death came into the world" (Wis. ii. 24). Subtly and with malice the tempter laid his plans. Taking the form of a serpent, he came to Eve. She had received the same glorious gifts of nature and grace that had been imparted to her husband, but she yielded to the flattery of the evil one. "Why hath God commanded you not to eat of every tree? You shall not die the death. Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Eve defied her Creator's law. She took and ate; then (as her daughters, alas! have ever done) she tempted the man with seductive words, and he also ate, and had fallen.

The Sentence. Swiftly came the punishment. That guilty pair were stripped of sanctifying grace. Their souls, which had been pure in God's sight, became hideous because of sin. In terror and

dismay Adam and Eve hid themselves, as if they could escape the wrath of God.

Then, as now, God was not only just but merciful. Punishment was necessary, that guilt might be expiated; but, great as was the guilt, the punishment was tempered with mercy. He summoned the guilty ones before Him, and the sentence of His anger thundered forth against them. Adam heard the words that doomed him and all his race to sufferings and death. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." And Eve received a penalty: "I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power."

Such was God's justice; but even Adam's sin had not destroyed the Creator's love for His creature. He wished still to give to man the heritage of heaven.

He promised a Redeemer, who would be born of a woman; that is, this Redeemer would be a man, with a human body and soul, like yours or mine. As we shall see, He was and is more than man. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." The Saviour is the Son of the eternal Father; God from all eternity, man from the time of His incarnation. Speaking to the serpent, God proclaimed: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head." This gracious promise of God is sometimes called the protevangelium, the "first good tidings" of His mercy to our fallen race.

After the Fall. Adam was driven from Eden. The earth was his; but it was a place of sorrow, of toil and of penance. No longer did he have the privilege of communion with his God. He had lost the wondrous gifts with which his soul had been endowed. His mind could no longer compass all human knowledge. His will was weakened and inclined to evil. The appetites of his lower nature waged an incessant war against his soul. He was filled with fear for the future, with dread of death, and with uncertainty as to his final salvation.

God again put him, as it were, on probation. He gave him the natural or moral law to keep, under pain of sin and punishment. He commanded that sacrifice be offered, as worship to Him, as atonement for sin, and as a prefiguring of that future sacrifice which would win for fallen man a new right to heaven.

Original Sin. God blessed Adam and Eve, and commanded them to "increase and multiply, and fill the earth." They were the first parents of all the generations that have peopled this world of ours in ages past, and of the myriads that will follow them until the end of time. All these, because they are descendants of Adam, are born destitute of the supernatural gifts which he possessed and lost. Every human soul (with one glorious exception, the Blessed Mother of God) comes into the world branded with guilt that came through Adam's fall; and this we call original sin, because it goes back to the origin of our race.

You and I were born with that guilt on our souls, destitute of sanctifying grace, objects of the wrath of God, deserving separation from Him forever.

"But is it not unfair that we should be punished for a sin that is not our own? We did not break that command of God in Eden. Why, then, should we suffer the penalty?" No; it is not unfair. God is infinite justice. He inflicts no penalty that is not deserved. The graces which He bestowed on Adam were gifts; Adam had no right to them. Having withdrawn them because Adam sinned, God was in no way bound to renew them for Adam's children. Although comparisons are imperfect, let us make one, a sort of parable. A great king gave honors and riches to a subject, not because of any deserving, but from pure generosity and love. Then He submitted that favored man to a small trial, a test of fidelity and obedience. And lo! ingratitude, unworthiness, treason! Would that king be blamable if he degraded that traitor, stripped him of all his honors and banished him from the kingdom? And could we reasonably expect that the king would afterwards bestow undeserved honors on that traitor's children? No; they would share in their father's disgrace, in his degradation, in his banishment.

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A human ruler would not forgive such treason, but God forgave it. His justice demanded that we share in Adam's punishment because we are of Adam's race; but His mercy has restored to us our birthright through the redemption accomplished by "the seed of the woman," his own incarnate Son.

Chapter VIII

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

OUR holy religion was given to us by God. The truths which we believe were revealed by Him. That revelation was made through inspiration; that is, at various times He has taught His truth and His law through writings made by certain men whose intellects were illumined by Him, and whom He guided to write what He wished to reveal to mankind.

When we endeavor to "give a reason for the faith that is in us," we shall find it necessary to quote many passages from these God-given books, which are known as the Bible, or the Holy Scriptures. The very fundamentals of our faith rest upon God's authority as manifested in His written word. Step by step throughout this book we shall state what we believe, and then we shall demonstrate the truth of our belief largely from the words of the sacred volume which contains God's revelation to man.

Therefore it will be well at this point to see what the Scriptures are, since to them we must look for God's truth and for the proofs of many of the articles of our Catholic faith.

Divine Authorship. God is the author of the Holy Scriptures. The men who penned the manuscripts that have been gathered together to form the book which we call the Bible were not writing their own ideas. They were instruments which God used to give to the world a knowledge of Himself and of His truth and His law. We may speak of the psalms of David, of the prophecy of Isaias, of the Gospel according to St. John, of the Epistles of St. Paul; but David and Isaias and John and Paul and the other writers were simply the penmen, the secretaries, inspired and guided by God, putting into written form the things which He

wished the world to know concerning Himself, His justice, His mercy, and man's immortal destiny.

Scripture and Tradition. Some of the doctrinal matters already treated, and the most of those yet to be considered in the pages of this book, are known to us only because God has revealed them. There are, indeed, certain truths of our Catholic faith which we can know by our reason. There are others, many others, which are entirely beyond the scope of our unaided human intellect, and which we could never know unless by revelation from God.

How do we get this revelation? How do we obtain this knowledge of hidden things? In two ways: through the Bible, the written word of God, and through the teaching of God's holy and visible Church. Or, in other words, through the Scriptures and through tradition, the two standards of our Catholic faith.

The Two Covenants. God may be known through His revelation as contained in the Old Testament, the narrative of His dealings with the nation which He chose as the recipient of His special favors and mercies; it gives a gradual manifestation which grew clearer and brighter as the time drew near for the promised fulfillment of His crowning mercy, the sending of the Saviour and the redemption of the world. He may be known much more clearly from the New Testament; for all the traditions of ancient days, all the visions of patriarchs and prophets, all the poetry of psalms and canticles, were only foreshadowings of that clearer revelation which God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, gave to the world when He became incarnate for our salvation, and taught and inspired His Apostles and evangelists that they might tell us of His life and His love.

A Living Teacher. But the Old Testament and the New are not our sole source of revelation. They are not the only standard of Christian faith. The written truth contained in them is not the only truth. God has not confined His revelation to the pages of a book, even though that book be inspired. He has entrusted it also to a society which He founded, to a living and infallible Church, which is empowered to teach and interpret that book, and which was commissioned and commanded to carry the knowledge of His

law and His love to all the nations of the earth until the end of time. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That Church was to bring the tidings of salvation and the knowledge of Him through whom salvation has come to our fallen race. "For this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

We shall have occasion to quote, in the pages of this book, many texts from the Bible. Therefore, it will be necessary, first of all, to know what the Bible is, what authority it possesses, and by whom it may be interpreted and explained.

A Written Revelation. The Catholic Church holds that the Scriptures are the written word of God, a revealing of His truth to men, given to the world at various times through inspired writers, beginning with Moses, the great lawgiver of His chosen people, and ending with the Apostles and evangelists, the teachers of God's new covenant with men.

The Council of Trent, "following the example of the orthodox Fathers, receives with piety and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testaments, since one God is the author of each." Such is the clear statement of our Catholic faith concerning the source and authorship of the Bible.

It is God's book. It differs utterly from all other books. They are of human origin; it is from God. They are liable to contain and to teach error; it is the work of one who cannot err and cannot deceive.

It tells us of the fall of our first parents, and of the promise of a Redeemer who would restore to man his eternal heritage. It tells of God's covenant with Abraham, the ancestor of Him in whom "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." In psalm and prophecy it tells of the longing of the world for the coming Messias. Such is the Old Testament.

And then we read of a lowly stable and the song of angels, of a Virgin Mother and a new-born Child. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." Miracles which manifested the Saviour's compassion for those who suffered: the preaching of a

new law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" humble fishermen of Galilee, who were to be teachers of all mankind; a supper at which God gave Himself to us as our heavenly food; a cross on Calvary, and One who died thereon for love of us; an empty tomb, and an angel's voice: "He is risen, he is not here." Such is the completion, the perfecting, of God's written revelation to man, the history of the founding of God's kingdom on earth. Such is the wonderful message from God which we call the New Testament.

The Canonical Books. These are the books which are considered by the Church to be parts of God's written revelation, and which, consequently, form our Catholic Bible. There are forty-five in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. Of those forming the Old Testament, thirty-eight are called simply "canonical" (belonging to the canon or list); these have always been accepted as parts of God's message to man, both by Jews and Christians. Seven others are "deutero-canonical" (of the second list), not that their authority is inferior to that of the canonical books, but because there was for a time some controversy, both among the Jews and the early Christians, as to their right to be included in the sacred writings. Protestants deny the inspiration of these, calling them "apocryphal" (of hidden or uncertain origin); but the Catholic Church accepts them as a part of the Bible, following the guidance of St. Augustine and other Fathers, and defining her belief by the decrees of the Councils of Florence and Trent, which gave us the list of the books of the Bible as we have them now.

"Private Interpretation." We have said that the Bible, the "written word," is not the only standard of our faith. There is a "living word," the teaching of God's truth by His Church; and this has been done by her in all the ages of her history. Apostles and Fathers and popes and councils have taught the Christian faith to men, always proclaiming the same unchanging truths; and this is what we call Apostolic tradition, the other standard of faith.

More than that, it pertains to the Church to interpret the

Scriptures, to determine the true sense of the written word of God. In the early days of Protestantism a favorite theory of the "reformers" was that each individual might interpret the Bible for himself. We know the results of that absurd theory: division and confusion, the multiplying of sects and heresies, a constantly growing spirit of unbelief and the denying of every supernatural truth; such are the fruits of "private interpretation."

Our Saviour promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against His Church. Did He make any such promise to individuals? Unity is the test of truth. If one man learns from the Scriptures that infant baptism is necessary, and another learns that it is not, evidently one of them is wrong; yet the Episcopalian, using the Scriptures, holds the first view, and the Baptist, studying the same holy Book, holds the second.

What is the Catholic standpoint? That the Church, and the Church alone, is the interpreter of the Bible. She is the living custodian and teacher of God's truth; and it is her office to define clearly what that truth is, and to explain the meaning of the written word in order that in it we may find the real revelation, the real message of God to the world.

We, the members of that Church, are not permitted to hold any opinion concerning the teachings of Holy Writ that is at variance with Catholic faith as set forth in the decrees of the Church and the "unanimous consent of the Fathers."

Is this tyrannical? Is it a taking away of our liberty? It is just as tyrannical as the action of the school-teacher who will not permit his pupils to hold that twice five is twelve; and it deprives us of liberty just as much as the law which forbids us to take our neighbor's goods. Every individual and every society that is placed in a position of authority must exercise power; and those who are subordinate to that power must give up their right to opinions and conduct that conflict with it. Our Church is such a society. She is commissioned by God to exercise a teaching power, and she is made infallible by Him in doing her work. We, her children, have absolutely no right to hold opinions that are not true; they are not true if she says that they are not.

Historical Value. The sacred Scriptures have a twofold authority, a twofold value. There is a divine value, because God inspired their writers. There is a human value, because they are historical documents. That such documents may have authority they must be *authentic, genuine* and *truthful.* What do these terms mean?

A writing is *authentic* when it really was the work of the author to whom it is attributed or dates back to the time when it is supposed to have been written. It is *genuine* if it has undergone no substantial change or addition. It is *truthful* if the author knew the facts of which he wrote and told them as he knew them.

Let us apply this, firstly, to the books of the New Testament, and especially to the four Gospels. They are *authentic;* they were really the work of the Evangelists, for the immediate disciples and successors of the Apostles have thus testified. St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp and others, as well as the great writers who succeeded them, mention the Gospels and their authors. They are *genuine;* the most ancient copies give us the text of the Gospels precisely as we have them now. They are *truthful;* for the Evangelists wrote of what they had seen and heard. Saints Matthew and John were Apostles of Christ, Mark was a disciple of St. Peter, and Luke was a companion of St. Paul and a friend of the Apostles. These men were not mistaken. They wrote of public facts, known to others as well as to them. They did not wish to deceive; for they offered their lives in testimony of the truth of what they had written. And what is true of them is true also of the other New Testament writers. They were messengers sent by God to give His written law to men, to spread His faith upon earth. Their books are authentic and genuine and truthful. The Apocalypse and some of the Epistles were written by companions of Christ, who had lived with Him, who had been taught by Him, and who loved Him. Some were the work of St. Paul, once a persecutor of the infant Church and later one of her greatest champions. One book, the Acts of the Apostles, was penned by St. Luke, the writer of the third Gospel. Where can we find, in this world of ours, a collection

of writings possessing greater historical value than do the books of the New Testament?

What is true of the New Testament is equally true of the Old. The books of the Jewish Scriptures formed the code of civil and religious life in the Hebrew nation. They were guarded with great care and with religious respect. These books are authentic; in most cases their authors are known and always have been known since the books were written. They are genuine; for, being religious books, they have always been transcribed with the greatest care, and extensive falsification was practically impossible. And they are truthful; their authors proclaimed God's message to man, promulgated His law, told of His dealings with His chosen people, and prophesied His future mercies to our fallen race.

God's Book. The Bible is "the inspired word of God." What do we mean by "inspired" and "inspiration"? These words convey the idea of a divine "breathing into," the infusion into the minds of certain men of knowledge which they were to transmit in writing to their fellow-men.

There is a difference between inspiration and revelation. When we speak of the latter we mean a direct disclosure by God to man of some sacred truth of which man was hitherto ignorant; but inspiration is a divinely directed impulse to teach by writing. Revelation means the imparting of a truth previously unknown; but inspiration may pertain to things already known naturally, either through the senses, or by the testimony of others, or in some other way.

Let me illustrate this by an example. I tell you a secret, something hitherto unknown to you. This resembles revelation. But if, when I impart that secret to you, I urge and authorize you to put it into writing, to publish it as coming from me in order that others may accept it on my authority, that commission resembles inspiration.

The Extent of Inspiration. Is every statement and every word of the Bible literally true? Not necessarily. Are we obliged to believe that every word, no matter how unimportant, was in-

spired by God? We are not. Space will not permit us to mention the errors concerning this matter which are found in the writings of non-Catholic authors, nor even to give an outline of the varying opinions expressed by scholars who were Catholics. It is undoubtedly difficult to reconcile certain Biblical statements with ascertained scientific or historical facts. Many leading theologians of recent years have summed up the matter thus: Inspiration is an impulse prompting a man to write of sacred things, with a special illumination imparted to his mind which supplies not indeed the words, but the thoughts to be written down, and with assistance which enables the writer to set forth the divine message in its entirety and without error, but in a manner and style which are influenced and perhaps limited by the extent of his literary skill and his merely human knowledge.

In this sense, then, the Bible is God's book. This view of the divine authorship of the Scriptures has been reaffirmed in an encyclical of Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus,* which emphasizes the doctrine of St. Augustine that "the Holy Ghost, who spoke by the sacred writers, did not intend to teach men these things (that is, things visible, or scientific truths) that are in no way profitable unto salvation." The encyclical goes on to state the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, that the sacred writers "went by what sensibly appeared, and put down what God wished to teach, in a way which could be understood by men of those days." And it finally sums up the Catholic viewpoint in these words: "By supernatural power the Holy Ghost so moved and impelled them to write, was so present in them, that the things which He ordered, and these only, they rightly understood and willed to write faithfully, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise it could not be said that God is the author of the entire Scripture. . . . Whence it follows that those who maintain that something false is found in any genuine passsage of the sacred writings either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration or make God Himself the author of such error."

Catholic authorities on Scriptural matters all reject the existence or the possibility of any real or absolute error in the inspired

writings. They explain in various ways certain difficult passages, and endeavor to harmonize them with other texts or with scientific or historical facts. They consider that these apparently inaccurate statements were simply couched in language that conformed to the knowledge and opinions of those for whose immediate use the sacred writings were intended, and that the writers of the Bible did not claim to write history or science.

In a day when, for all mankind, the earth was the centre of the universe and the sun revolved around it, how could a writer give a scientific view of the standing-still of the sun at the bidding of Josue? As Leo XIII said, "They did not seek to penetrate the secrets of nature, but described and dealt with things in more or less figurative language, or in terms that were commonly used at the time." You and I, dear reader, do the same, in this enlightened twentieth century. We speak of the sun's "setting," though it does not set: our part of the earth simply turns away from it. We speak of a "full moon" or a "half moon," though that satellite does not really change its size. We describe the stars as tiny twinkling points of light, although our great and glowing sun is far smaller than many of them. We are following a convenient and well-recognized way of thinking and speaking and that is just what the sacred writers did.

Resting on Authority. Our Catholic belief in the inspiration of the Bible rests directly on the divine authority of the living Church of God. No matter what difficulties may be raised against the doctrine of Biblical inspiration in the name of "higher criticism," history or science, Catholics will ever base their faith on the simple fact that their Church, speaking infallibly and with divine authority, teaches it as a truth revealed by God. That Church has a God-given right to teach revelation; and her voice declares that that revelation is to be found in God's book as interpreted by her, His living teacher, whom He has commanded us to hear, and who is ever guided by the Spirit of God.

The Church's position, then, is briefly this: The Bible is the written word of God, given to the world through men who were inspired to write its various parts. In other words, "The sacred

books of both Testaments have God for their author." Divine inspiration extends to matters other than faith or morals, though not necessarily to the letters or separate words of the sacred narrative. Catholic theologians hold generally that inspiration includes "almost all the things and sentences which were written by the one who wrote the book." That is, whatever may be proved to have belonged originally to the text is a real part of the word of God.

Divine inspiration, then, extends to all the contents of Holy Writ in such a manner as to exclude from it every positive and formal error. But Catholic scholars do not affirm that such inspiration makes them all true in exactly the same manner. Some are "relative truths," expressed in language which is now known to be inaccurate and unscientific, as we have explained above. Many Catholic writers extend this restriction of "relative truth" to all passages of a scientific nature and to many historical statements found in the pages of Scripture. As St. Jerome well said, "as if many things in the Holy Scriptures are expressed according to the opinion of the time when they were told and not according to the truth of the matter." God did not reveal to the writers of the Bible the true state of affairs in scientific things; He left these to be discovered by man's genius and research in later ages.

Our Church, then, while she defines that "God is the author of the Scriptures," and that His book is without error because He inspired it, leaves us considerable latitude as to what we may hold concerning various unimportant passages and minor details that have little or no bearing on faith and morals.

Such, then, is the Bible, which is a standard of our faith. We Catholics believe that it is truly God's book, His written revelation to our fallen race. It teaches His truth, and it cannot teach error. It needs to be interpreted, and He has provided an infallible interpreter, His holy Catholic Church. And, besides being God's book, it is a human historical document of unquestionable value and authority, authentic, genuine and truthful.

Therefore, when we treat of dogmas of our holy faith, when we

tell of Adam's fall, of the life and death of the Son of God, of the founding of His earthly kingdom, of grace and sacrifice and sacraments, and of the things of eternity, we use this book to confirm what we say. We show that what we believe and what our Church teaches is true, by no less an authority than that of God Himself. Through the Holy Scriptures God has taught us His truth. Therefore to them we shall turn frequently to show that our Catholic faith is precisely what He has revealed in that wondrous written message which He has sent to the world through the minds and pens of holy men, and which our Catholic Church has collected and preserved and cherished as a God-given treasure.

Here we may encounter some objections. Instead of always "cherishing" the Bible, did not the Catholic Church, at various times in the past, condemn the reading of it? Yes, in a certain sense. Her practice as to the use of the sacred books by the laity has varied with varying circumstances. In past ages she sometimes forbade the unguided reading of the Scriptures for two reasons: first, because parts of them are evidently unsuited to the very young or to the ignorant; and second, because during the Middle Ages, when heresies were rife, corrupt translations of the Bible were numerous. She strove to safeguard her children from error and moral evil. But when the Vulgate version had been made and approved she insisted on its use by the faithful in general, with the recommendation that explanatory notes be appended, so as to preclude all danger of abuse.

"But is it not true that the Church of Rome, in past centuries, *chained the Bible?*" Undoubtedly, but not to prevent its use; on the contrary, she did so that all might be able to use it. Each church, in the Middle Ages, possessed usually a single copy, a ponderous folio, written by hand, because there was no printing in those days. This was portable property, and salable; it was valued at perhaps $1,500; and was, very properly, fastened to its desk by a stout chain, lest it unaccountably disappear. So much for "the chained Bible."

A Twofold Standard. As we have stated already, God's truth is not contained exclusively in the Scriptures. There is an un-

written word of God also, which we call Apostolic tradition, the voice of the living Church. If our Saviour had meant that His Church should be guided by a book alone, why did He not at once provide that book? He did not do so. He Himself wrote nothing. He commanded the world to hearken to the living voice of His Apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth me." For about twenty years after the ascension there was not a single book of the New Testament in existence. The various epistles were written at infrequent intervals thereafter, to churches that were widely separated. There is no mention of even an incomplete collection of the New Testament books until the year 180. As there was no New Testament during all those years, and as a large part of the Christian teaching is not to be found anywhere in the Old Testament, it is evident that the Scriptures could not have been, in those days, the sole deposit of Christian faith. All that the early Christians had was the living voice of the Church, which is Apostolic tradition; and that is just as truly a standard of faith now as it was then.

The Apostles established the Church and converted a great part of the pagan world without a Bible. Many nations have received the faith without being able to read. If the Sacred Scriptures had been a requisite for conversion and salvation, a great part of the human race could never have made use of this means of grace, at least until the invention of printing. What, then, becomes of the Protestant argument that "the Bible is the sole rule of faith," the one and all-sufficient message of God to men?

Versions of the Scriptures. The Bible was translated into Latin about the end of the fourth century by St. Jerome. This is known as the Vulgate or "common" version. It is approved for use in the Catholic Church, and from it translations have been made into all the tongues of earth.

The one in use among English-speaking Catholics is commonly called the Douay version, though rather incorrectly, for the translation was not made at Douay, and only the Old Testament was printed there, in 1609. The New Testament had been already published at Rheims, in 1582. Because of crudities of wording,

amended editions were afterwards issued, of which the most widely used is that of Dr. Challoner, published in 1750.

What of the Protestant Bible? The "King James version" was issued in 1604-11, and was revised under the name of the "authorized version" in 1711. It is undoubtedly a masterpiece of literature, but God's word was intended to be more than a specimen of graceful diction. Its text is distorted here and there to support the belief of those who wrote it; and it is, after all, a very incomplete Bible, since it rejects several books which the whole Christian Church has accepted as parts of the written revelation for centuries before there was a Protestant in the world. A beautiful example of English literary style is not necessarily a trustworthy guide to faith and salvation.

But if this page is being read by a non-Catholic, let him understand that whenever I quote a text from the Douay version he is at liberty to look up the same passage in his Protestant Bible. And he will find that even in that imperfect and incomplete translation there is ample proof of the truth of the faith which we Catholics hold, the faith which God has revealed to the world through the inspired books of the Holy Scriptures and through the one true Church which He founded on earth to bring knowledge and grace and salvation to men.

Chapter IX

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

MANY centuries after the deplorable fall of man, the Saviour came. He had been promised to our first parents; His coming and His greatness, His love and His atoning sacrifice had been prefigured by the patriarchs and foretold by the prophets of God. "A virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a Son"—such was the sublime message of Isaias. The Virgin was Mary; her Son was Jesus Christ. He is the Saviour of the world, and the incarnate Son of God. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14).

God's Dealings with Men. The coming of that promised one was long delayed. God waited thousands of years, that man might realize fully the need of redemption. Adam's descendants had peopled the earth, and they soon forsook the law of God, till He determined to destroy them and their wickedness by a mighty deluge, with the exception of one family which had deserved His love.

Centuries passed; He chose one man as the recipient of His choicest mercies, the patriarch Abraham, destined to be the father of a great nation of believers and an ancestor of the Saviour who was to come. From him were descended the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel.

When the people of God were in bondage in the land of Egypt, God raised up a deliverer, Moses. Through him, on Mount Sinai, was given a code of moral law, the Ten Commandments, together with a law of sacrifice and worship which foreshadowed the infinite sacrifice and the perfect worship which the Redeemer was

to establish on earth. And when the Jewish people became a monarchy, their second king was David, from whose royal line, according to God's promise, the Messias was to be born.

In the centuries before the Saviour's coming there were many examples of eminent sanctity: venerable patriarchs, inspired prophets, holy men and women who were faithful to God's law; but the Hebrew people as a whole became unworthy of their high estate. The outward ceremonies of worship were looked upon as all-important; and this was the Pharisaism which our Lord rebuked so scathingly. They ceased to observe God's law, of which the ceremonial law was merely a symbol.

God inflicted many punishments on them. Twice were they carried into captivity; their holy city and its glorious temple were destroyed and rebuilt; finally the last vestige of power was taken from the nation by the might of Rome. But through all these adversities, faith in the coming Redeemer endured and increased. And at last He came!

God and Man. Who was the Redeemer? Jesus Christ, the Son of God; the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The only-begotten of the Father took to Himself a human nature, with a body and soul, and was born of a Virgin Mother. He is one Person, possessing two distinct natures. He is God from all eternity, for God has no beginning; He became man when He was conceived in the immaculate womb of Mary. Being man as well as God, He could suffer and die; and He did so, voluntarily, because of His love for us, that He might make atonement for our sins. Being God as well as man, He raised Himself from the dead, and raised us also from our fallen state, restoring to us the right to our immortal heritage, the eternal vision of God.

"What do you believe of Jesus Christ?" asks the Catechism. And the answer is: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, true God and true man."

Such is a brief summary of our Catholic faith concerning the person and the mission of Him who bears the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our God. Let us explain its details more

thoroughly, and then proceed to "give a reason for the faith that is in us."

The sacred body of Jesus was formed by the power of the Holy Ghost from the substance of the Virgin Mother. His soul was created by a direct act of God, as is every human soul. He was not two persons. He was and is the only-begotten of the Father, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity. For love of us, that He might redeem us, He took a human nature like ours, becoming really a man. He is the Creator of all things; He became a creature. He is one person, possessing two distinct natures, one divine, the other human. He is God and man.

This, then, is our Catholic faith: that that wonderful man whom we call our Saviour was not merely a man. We have considered in a previous chapter the mystery of the Holy Trinity. There are three persons in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and of these the Second Person became man, that He might bring redemption to our fallen race.

The Need of a Saviour. Was it necessary that there should be a *divine* Saviour? Could we have been redeemed if God had not become man? It is easily believable and is commonly held that God might have pardoned us without exacting satisfaction or atonement; but our faith teaches us that such was not His will. He wished to exercise strict justice, and He wished also to show His infinite goodness and mercy.

Therefore God determined to exact an adequate atonement for man's sins. What was the degree of the malice of these sins? Infinite, because they were and are offences against Infinite Majesty. What atonement, then, would be adequate? Not the sacrifice of a mere creature; for no creature, even the holiest and most exalted, could offer more than a finite satisfaction. In the designs of God, an infinite atonement was necessary, and this could only be made by an infinite victim, or *God*.

But God is immortal and imperishable. He could not be immolated, could not die, *unless* He assumed a nature that was mortal and perishable. Therefore the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man.

The Incarnate Word. This is what we call the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery by which the Son of God became the Son of Mary, possessing thereafter not only human flesh but a human soul as well. Since the beginning of the Saviour's life in the womb of His Virgin Mother, He is perfect God and perfect man. He retains His divine nature in all its integrity and perfection, and He has a perfect and complete human nature as well. He took a real body like ours, not merely an outward semblance, such as the angels have had when God sent them as messengers to men, but a body with brain and heart and muscles and nerves and bones, like yours and mine. He suffered hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and was wearied as we are by toil and travel. He has a real soul like ours, and He had a human will; for otherwise His human nature would have been incomplete. And this human will of His helped Him to atone more perfectly for the sins of men; for as it was the human will of Adam that caused the fall, it was proper that the human will of Jesus should have a share in the reparation.

He had, then, two distinct wills. He Himself refers to these in the piteous prayer which He offered at Gethsemani: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." That is, when His human will prompted Him to pray for deliverance from sorrow and suffering, He immediately brought that will into conformity with the will of God, which was His own divine will.

He had human affections, like us, because He was a man like us. The virgin Apostle St. John was very dear to Him, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He had compassion on the afflicted. He lamented at the tomb of Lazarus, and wept over the city of Jerusalem. He was human in all things, except sin.

The Hypostatic Union. Let us state again, concisely, the facts concerning the person who is called Jesus Christ. He has two natures, the divine and the human. He has two wills, and two distinct "operations," as the philosophers say; that is, during His earthly life He could and did act as God and as man. But He is not two persons. His two natures are not fused together;

the divine does not absorb the human. Both are perfectly distinct, but they are united because they both belong to the one divine Person, Jesus Christ, the incarnate God. This is what theologians call the "hypostatic union," which means the union of underlying substances.

The existence of two natures in Christ explains certain assertions of the Scriptures which would seem at first glance to contradict each other. "'The Father is greater than I," says our Lord (John xvi. 28). In what sense? Here He is speaking of His human nature, which is infinitely inferior to the nature of God. "The Father and I are one," here He speaks of the divine nature, which He possesses equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Athanasian Creed explains this: "Christ is equal to the Father according to His divinity, and less than the Father according to His humanity."

The Prophecies. Jesus Christ was the Messias, long expected, the fulfillment of numberless promises and prophecies. When God passed sentence on Adam He promised a Redeemer, "the seed of the woman." His servant Abraham, many centuries later, was to be the one "in whose seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed." David was to be the ancestor of a King who would reign forever. Prophets were sent to the people of God; their inspired utterances unfolded more and more clearly the nature and mission of Him who was to bring salvation to the world.

He was to be born in Bethlehem; so said the prophet Micheas. He would come while the second temple of the Jews was still standing; for Aggeus foretold that "the desired of all nations shall come and fill it with glory," and that temple was destroyed by Titus a few years after the coming of Christ. He was to be born when Jewish independence had ceased to be; and the Romans conquered Judea in the year 39 before Christ. Daniel, computing by "weeks of years," fixed the date of the Saviour's coming; and as the time drew near there was a widespread spirit of expectancy, not only among the Jews but among the Gentile nations as well; for the Redeemer was at hand.

He was to be born of a Virgin; such was the wonderful message

of Isaias. A precursor would "prepare the way of the Lord," according to the same sublime prophet. A star was to herald His coming, and kings from distant lands would bring gifts. He was to be a priest, like Melchisedech, offering a mystic and perpetual sacrifice. He would found a kingdom that will endure forever. He was to be a worker of wondrous miracles. "God himself will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free": thus spoke the prophet Isaias.

The Saviour was to suffer and die. How wonderful are the prophecies which describe the great sacrifice that ended on Calvary! He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed by one who would sit at table with Him, forsaken by His disciples, mocked, spat upon, scourged and crowned with thorns. Gall and vinegar would be His drink; lots would be cast for His garments. His hands and feet would be pierced. He would die between the wicked, but His body was not to see corruption.

Can we realize that this history of the great atonement is not a narrative or record of things already accomplished? It was a story of things to come, far in the future, not set down by eye-witnesses or other contemporaries. It was written and read and believed hundreds of years before the events took place, and every detail came true. "Search the scriptures," said our Lord to His enemies; "for you think in them to have everlasting life; and the same are they that give testimony of me."

The Saviour's Birth. The time came when the great mystery of God's mercy was to be accomplished. God was to come upon earth. He was to become man, a glorious offspring of our race, born of a woman, although miraculously conceived.

The Virgin Mary and her holy spouse Joseph journeyed to Bethlehem, the city of their royal ancestor David. And there, in the darkness of a winter night, in the shelter of a lowly stable, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The Immaculate Mother brought forth her Child, the Saviour of the world, sent to bring "peace on earth to men of good will."

How do we know these things? From the holy Gospels; and their testimony is true. They are narratives of our Lord's life, the work of two of His Apostles and two of their disciples. Written in the first century of our Christian era, they describe events which were of recent occurrence. They tell us of the birth of the Redeemer, of His life and work, of His death and resurrection. They show us that He was truly man. They show us that He was truly God.

The other books of the New Testament teach us the same glorious truths. Do we need other evidence that there was a Saviour, the founder of our holy faith? Let us turn to pagans. Read the words of Tacitus, the Roman historian: "This name [Christians] is derived from Christus, who was punished by the procurator Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius." Lucian, in the year 165, says: "The Christians are still worshipping that great man who was gibbeted in Palestine."

Our Lord, then, is a historic character, not an imaginary personage. The story of His life, as we know it from the New Testament, is not fiction; it is true and unimpeachable in every detail. That Testament tells of His miracles, wondrous works which showed that His power was the power of God, superior to nature's laws. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the leper; He raised the dead to life; and, finally, He showed Himself to be the Master of life and death by rising triumphant from the tomb where His lifeless body had been laid. His death showed that He was man. His resurrection showed that He was God.

Was He God? "But," some may object, "all these prophecies and texts demonstrate merely that there was a wonderful man, a Messias, sent by God. They do not necessarily prove that He was God as well as man." This is Unitarian doctrine. The followers of that sect believe that Jesus was a man only, finite, not infinite and, therefore, inferior to the Supreme Being in nature and person. They hold that He was human, and not divine in any true sense of the word, although "intimately united with God" because of His earthly mission.

Let us, then, give in some detail the proofs of our Saviour's divinity. Take the second Psalm, which tells of the vain efforts of persecutors against Christ and His Church. It speaks of the coming Messias, in these words: "The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." And in Psalm 109 we read: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool. . . . With thee is the principality in the day of thy strength, in the brightness of the saints; from the womb before the day-star I begot thee." The Psalmist is speaking of the coming Messias, and he represents Him as the Son of God, sitting at the right hand of His Father; that is, equal to Him in all things; as begotten of the Father from all eternity.

Turn to the prophecy of Isaias, chapters 7 to 12. "Emmanuel" will be born of a Virgin Mother; He will be the liberator of the people of God; His reign will be world-wide and peacemaking. "A Child is born to us, a son is given to us . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (ix. 6). That Child is the Messias, the one who came to bring peace to men, and He is "God the Mighty," or "the Strong God," in Hebrew, *El,* a word which is applied to God only. He is "the Father of the world to come"; in Hebrew, the Father of Eternity, or the Father Eternal, titles which, manifestly, pertain to God only, for He alone is eternal.

The Words of Christ. Let us go to the Gospels, and see what Jesus said about Himself. He openly declared His divinity, many times, calling Himself God and the Son of God. He made this declaration before His disciples, before the Jewish people, and before the judges who condemned Him.

Here are His words addressed to Nicodemus (John iii. 16): "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

What does He claim, in these words? That He was not merely

an adoptive son of God, as we all are, but *the only-begotten Son,* possessing divinity, eternity, omnipotence and perfect equality with the Father.

In St. Matthew (xvi. 13-19) we have the glorious profession of faith made by St. Peter. "Whom do men say that the son of man is? Whom do you say that I am?" And Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And the Saviour declared: "Flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

If Peter were not speaking of real sonship, if he intended to say that Christ was an "adoptive son" of God, like other men, why would a special revelation from the heavenly Father be necessary?

Let us go further in the Gospels. At the Last Supper, when Philip said: "Show us the Father," Christ answered: "Philip, who seeth me seeth also the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and Father in me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works. . . . Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son. . . . You shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (John xiv. 8-20).

Here our Saviour manifestly claims *unity of nature* with His heavenly Father, as He does in that other passage of the same chapter where He promises to come with the Father into the soul of the just man: "We will make our abode with him"; for only God can enter into the soul of man.

There are many declarations which our blessed Lord made openly before the Jewish people. In the Gospel of St. John (v. 18) we read of the cure of the paralytic at the pool of Bethsaida: "The Jews sought to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God." Further on, He claims the power of raising the dead: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom he will," which means that as God the Father by His own power raises the dead because He is God, so does Christ,

because He too is God. And again: "He hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father," or, in other words, that equal honor shall be given to both Father and Son, because they possess the same divine nature.

Turn to the tenth chapter of St. John. The Jews questioned our Lord: "Who art thou?" And He answered: "I and the Father are *one,*" that is, of the same nature, though different persons.

And when Jesus stood bound before the tribunal of Caiphas, the high-priest said to Him: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou art the Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus answered: "Thou hast said it," a declaration for which He was adjudged guilty of the capital crime of blasphemy. "We have a law, and according to the law he should die, because *he maketh himself the Son of God.*" It is easy to see how the Jews understood the words of the Saviour. They did not think that He was speaking figuratively. They condemned Him because they understood Him literally.

It is clear, then, that Jesus Christ claimed to be God, equal to the Father. Was He deceived? Was He an enthusiast, a monomaniac? Read this lucid admission written by William Ellery Channing, the great Unitarian leader: "The charge of an extravagant, self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus. Where can we find traces of it in His history? Do we detect them in the calm authority of His precepts, in the mild, practical, beneficent spirit of His religion, or in the good sense, the knowledge of human nature, which He always discovers in His estimate and treatment of the different classes of men with whom He acted?" No; the doctrine which He taught, the work of reparation and exaltation of humanity which He accomplished, the religion which He founded, all demonstrate His perfect wisdom. Could an unbalanced mind have devised a regenerating power so marvelously efficient?

Christ was not deceived. Neither was He a deceiver. He was sincere in all His life and words and actions, not seeking for glory,

but manifesting ever an admirable spirit of humility. "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

To sum up our argument, then, in the lucid form given by the eminent Father Tanquerey: "Christ is either insane, or an impostor, or God. But the first two suppositions are absurd, as history shows, and as even the enemies of Christianity admit. Therefore Christ is truly God."

The Resurrection. And now we come to the greatest proof of all. Our religion is no religion at all unless Christ is God, and our dogma of His divinity is based on the fact that He rose from the dead. As St. Paul says: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, then is your faith vain."

How do we know that Jesus rose from the dead? Because He foretold His death and promised His resurrection, and He kept His promise. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up again. (He spoke of the temple of his body)" (John ii. 19, 21). "As Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Matt. xii. 40). "They shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. xx. 19). "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day" (Luke xxiv. 46). And in many other texts He promised the same miracle, a promise which was as well known to His enemies as to His friends.

He was dead on the cross of Calvary. He was living three days later. He remained on earth for forty days, meeting His disciples often, eating with them and teaching them. He proved to the doubting Thomas that His body was real, not a phantom. "Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing" (John xx. 27). Well may we, like Thomas, cry out: "My Lord and my God!" "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

Moreover, we know the truth of our Lord's resurrection from the preaching of the Apostles. St. Peter announced it in his first

sermon to the people of Jerusalem. "The author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts iii. 15). The Jewish priests could not gainsay a fact known to all. St. Paul testifies that the risen Saviour "was seen by more than five hundred at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep" (1 Cor. xv. 6).

The resurrection of Christ, then, is a historic fact, and a fact that is unexplainable unless we admit that it is a wonderful manifestation of the power of God over created things. It is Christ's crowning miracle. He who rose from the dead is the author of life, the eternal God.

Jesus, Our Saviour. "His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke ii. 21). "For this day is born to you a saviour who is Christ the Lord" (ii. 11).

The name "Jesus" expresses well the purpose of His earthly coming; it signifies "Saviour." The word "Christ" means "the anointed one," and this is also the meaning of the Hebrew title "Messias."

Jesus Christ, the Messias, came to save us. He died in atonement for our sins. He revealed to the world a moral law far more perfect than that of Sinai: "Love your enemies; do good to those that hate you; and pray for those that persecute and calumniate you." That the knowledge of Him and of His law might be brought to all men in all succeeding ages, He founded a Church, His earthly kingdom, commanding His Apostles to "teach all nations." "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to the whole world for a testimony to all nations."

He is our God. Our Catholic Church has always proclaimed His divinity. He is our Saviour, and not solely because He died for us on Calvary. That sacrifice, indeed, restored to us the right to heaven, but its merits are applied to our souls through the Church which He founded and the sacraments which He instituted. He is our Saviour because He has brought us to a knowledge of His saving truth through His holy Church, and because

He gives us abundant strength for our souls through the channels of grace which that Church brings to us.

He is God, and we are the most unworthy of all His creatures. But He is also man, and has chosen us as His brethren. Being man, He has suffered and died for us. Being God, He has atoned for our guilt by an infinite sacrifice. Our Catholic Church is His kingdom, founded for love of us; and we, the children of that Church, are not merely His subjects but His children, of whom He demands faith and hope and love.

Napoleon Bonaparte was by no means a saint, but he was a man of exceptional genius. Read his testimony: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I myself, have founded great empires; but upon what did these depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this day millions would die for Him. I think I understand human nature, and I tell you that all these others were men, and I am a man. None else is like Him; Jesus Christ is more than man. . . . Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years He makes a demand; He asks for the human heart, and forthwith the demand is granted. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the divinity of Christ."

Chapter X

THE MOTHER OF GOD

WE have written of the fall of man, of the promise of redemption, and of the manner in which that promise was fulfilled. "The seed of the woman" was sent to crush the head of the serpent. That seed was the incarnate Son of God, our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. That woman was *Mary,* chosen by God to be the earthly mother of the God-Man, the Saviour of the world.

Therefore, at this point in our explanation of the teachings of the Catholic faith, it is fitting that we devote a chapter to her whom we Catholics deservedly honor and venerate as the greatest of God's saints and our principal intercessor before His heavenly throne.

The Redeemer promised by God was to be truly *a man,* not a vision or a phantasm, not a spirit, but flesh and blood like us, with a human soul like ours. Being man, a real member of our race, He was to have a mother. And that mother was to be a virgin. The long-expected of the nations would have no earthly father. Isaias, the most sublime of the prophets of God, saw from afar the brightness of Mary's coming, and proclaimed the tidings to the expectant world. "A virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a Son; and His name shall be Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace."

Long did the world await the coming of the Redeemer. His life and work were foretold by the prophets. Daniel had set the date for His birth, "seventy weeks" of years (490 years) from the time when he delivered his message. Micheas had told the place: "Thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda."

In the little town of Nazareth, more than nineteen hundred

years ago, dwelt Mary, the virgin whom God had chosen to be the mother of His Son. She was espoused to the aged Joseph; and a pious tradition tells us that he, like her, had vowed virginity. Thus God gave a protector to her and to the Child who was to be born of her. She knew from the Scriptures that the time was at hand for the advent of the Saviour, but in her humility she did not dream that she was to be His Mother. The voice of an angel of God announced the wondrous tidings: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. . . . Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." And Mary answered: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The gentle virgin questioned no longer. She submitted herself at once to the holy will of God. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."

Mary the Mother of God. We Catholics hold that the Mother of Jesus is truly the Mother of God. This dogma of our Church has been misunderstood and opposed for centuries by her enemies. Let us see, then, *why* we hold it.

Mary is truly entitled to be called the Mother of God because she is truly the Mother of Jesus, who is God. This point of Catholic dogma was defined in the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431; it is no new doctrine.

He whom Mary bore, giving Him her own flesh and blood, was not a human person. He was God. His human body and soul were united to the divinity of the Second Person of the Trinity in the one Person of Jesus Christ, by what is called the "hypostatic union"—that is, the union of Christ's human nature to the "hypostasis" or substance of the Divinity.

Every human soul is a separate creation of God, and is united to the body in the moment of the body's formation, giving it a distinct life and being. Although a woman is not the mother of the soul of her child, she is, nevertheless, truly the mother of that

child. Mary is not the Mother of the divinity of our Saviour, for that had no beginning; nor was she the Mother of His human soul, for that was created directly by God; but she is truly the Mother of God, because she is the Mother of the one person Jesus Christ, who is truly God.

In the words of St. John Chrysostom: "Rightful is it to honor thee, O Mother of God, ever blessed, free from all stain, more full of honor than the Cherubim, more glorious than the Seraphim; for without loss of virginity thou didst bring forth the Word!"

Mary Ever Virgin. In these days of unbelief, when many who still claim to be Christians are openly denying the virgin birth of the Saviour, it is our duty here to declare and to reaffirm the constant teaching of the Catholic Church: that Mary was a virgin when she conceived the Redeemer of the world; that she remained a virgin when she bore Him; and that she ever afterwards lived a life of virginity.

Such has been the faith of our Church since her beginning. The assertions of present-day unbelievers are no new things; they are repetitions of ancient and blasphemous heresies. It is true that the New Testament nowhere states definitely the continued virginity of Mary, but nowhere does it state or imply that she ceased to be a virgin. We read, indeed, of the "brethren" of our Lord; but this word was often used in the Scriptures to denote more distant relatives. Our Saviour is spoken of in the Gospels as Mary's "first-born son," but this was a legal expression among the Jews, meaning that a mother had been blessed with male offspring for the first time, without considering whether or not she had subsequent children. From the very beginning of our Church her doctrine has been that Mary by a virgin birth brought forth the Saviour of the world, and that she had no other child, a doctrine which is based on the divine tradition which is one of the standards of our Catholic faith.

The Glories of Mary. Whenever God in His providence destines one of His creatures to perform some important work or fill some exalted office, He gives the graces necessary for that work or that office. He chose Mary to be the Mother of His Son, the

Saviour of the world; therefore He endowed her with wonderful graces and perfections, that she might be made worthy of that sublime dignity. Though the angels are by their nature superior to man, there is no gift bestowed on them by God that can ever make them equal to her who is the Queen of Angels. There is no perfection found in any of the saints of God that can ever compare with those possessed by the Queen of Saints. From her holy virginal body was to be formed the body of the Son of God made man; and the soul of Mary was enriched with marvelous graces because she was destined to conceive and bring forth the Lord of all, the living God, the light of the world. She was, as it were, the mould fashioned by the hand of God, from which came the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ. In the words of St. Bernard: "If you would know the Mother, look at the Son."

Mary Immaculate. Although born of a sinful race, Mary was exempted from the stain of original sin that has defiled the soul of every other child of Adam. She is indeed "our tainted nature's solitary boast." She was "redeemed in anticipation" by her divine Son. He created her pure and holy, free from spot or blemish. This privilege, given to her alone, is called her Immaculate Conception.

Here are the words of Pope Pius IX, who defined this doctrine of our faith: "By virtue of the merits of the Redeemer, Christ our Lord, she was never subject to original sin, but was altogether preserved from the stain of her origin, and therefore was redeemed in a more sublime manner." Jesus was her Son; He was her Saviour as well, and He preserved her from both original and actual sin; from the former by a special exemption, and from the latter by His abundant grace. It would have been utterly unthinkable that she who was to "crush the serpent's head" should ever be crushed by him, that the Mother of Him who was to overthrow the kingdom of Satan should ever have been subject to Satan's sway.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was definitively set forth as a dogma of the Catholic faith in the year 1854, but it has always been implicitly accepted and believed by the Church.

Many of the Fathers taught it as we have it now, although it is true that some of the earlier theologians opposed it. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman," was God's judgment on the serpent; and it is reasonable to suppose that these "enmities" began at the first moment of her existence, that she was never his friend. She is the one whom God's messenger hailed as "full of grace"; and it is proper to believe that she was never destitute of grace. She is "blessed among women," because she was chosen by God to be His Mother; and it was eminently fitting that at the very beginning of her life she should be made worthy of that glorious dignity. Therefore the Catholic Church has defined that Mary was conceived without original sin.

Mary the Sinless. As her origin was, so was her life. The angels of heaven won their glory by one act of fealty to their Creator. Mary, during all her life, made many such acts of heroic virtue, giving continual glory to God. She had many a sorrow, many a thing to suffer; but of the greatest cause of sorrow and suffering she knew nothing. She never sinned.

She grew from childhood into girlhood, and there is a legend or tradition that these years were spent in the seclusion of the temple, whither she had been brought by her saintly parents. She became a woman, the very incarnation of holy womanhood, purer and more spotless than any other of the daughters of Eve. She brought into the world her Son and her God. She saw Him suffer; she saw Him die; she saw Him risen from the dead; she bade Him farewell before He ascended to His heavenly throne, and then, after some years, she closed her eyes on this world and opened them in the eternal kingdom of her beloved Son. And all this she did, all this she endured, without ever offending God in the smallest degree, without ever incurring the least stain of sin.

Her Son, our Saviour, did not sin and could not sin, because He is God. Mary could sin, because she was human, but she did not. She was ever "full of grace," because she was chosen to be the Mother of Him who is the source of all grace.

Mary Our Mother. Our Saviour gave His Mother to us that she might be our Mother also. By the cross of Calvary stood the

Mater Dolorosa and the faithful Apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." To them were addressed the comforting words of the dying Redeemer: "Mother, behold thy son; Son, behold thy Mother." St. John, there at the foot of the cross, was the representative of all mankind, and not only to him but to all of us was Mary given as a Mother. She is far dearer to our Blessed Lord than any of His saints, because they are His friends merely; she is His Mother. And her intercession with Him is being ever exercised for us, her other children, who assuredly need it that we may obtain salvation.

There is an ancient tradition that when the Blessed Virgin passed to her eternal reward, her body as well as her soul was taken to heavenly glory. It is a beautiful idea, that the immaculate body which had borne the Saviour of the world never knew corruption; an idea that is reasonable and sanctioned by the Church's ritual, though it is not a part of defined Catholic faith.

Our Devotion to Mary. Let us now state clearly why and to what extent our Church honors the Blessed Mother of God. We are often accused of "Mariolatry," of giving to her a species of worship which belongs to God alone. This charge is absolutely untrue.

The Catholic Church honors Mary with the highest form of religious veneration that can be given to a creature. It does not believe, and never has believed that she can give us mercy or grace or any blessing whatever; for each and all of these must come from the giver of all good, who is God Himself. She is the most exalted of His creatures, holier, more glorious, more blessed than any angel or any saint; but she is in no sense a goddess. She is human, not divine. She is a glorified human soul in heaven; more perfect than any other soul can ever be, except the soul of her divine Son.

The Catholic Church *does not adore* Mary. It gives the supreme worship which we call adoration to one Being and to one only, to almighty God, the Creator and Lord of all things. It honors the saints with religious veneration, because of their sanctity. It gives a higher form of that veneration to Mary, because

of the perfect holiness of her origin and her life, and her dignity as the Mother of the Saviour. But *it adores no one but God.*

The homage paid to Mary is not a new practice. Far back in the early years of Christianity we find its beginnings. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the first leaders of the infant Church were "persevering in prayer with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus." St. Ignatius of Antioch, in the first century, speaks of "Jesus the son of Mary and the Son of God, conceived of the seed of David, but also of the Holy Ghost." A little later came St. Irenæus, who drew a beautiful comparison and parallel between "the first Eve and the second," the woman whose disobedience caused the fall and the woman whose obedience gave the Redeemer to the world.

In later ages the devotion of the faithful to the Mother of God manifested itself throughout the Christian world. Churches were dedicated in her name; shrines of pilgrimage in her honor, under various titles, were established in every land. Catholics everywhere were filled with devotion to her, and her intercession was invoked as a most effective aid in man's quest for grace and salvation.

Here is a remarkable bit of testimony from the writings of John Wyclif, whose heresies prepared the way for Protestantism in England. It reads as follows: "It seems to me impossible that we should obtain the reward of heaven without the help of Mary. There is no sex or age, no rank or position, which has no need to call for the help of the Holy Virgin."

In more recent centuries came the rosary, and, at a somewhat earlier date, the Angelus. Pious sodalities were founded, and several festivals were established in Mary's honor during the Church's year. And the beauty of Catholic homage to the Blessed Mother of God reached its climax when, in 1854, the Holy See defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Let us, then, make a summary of the reasons why our Church holds Mary in such exalted honor. She is the Mother of God, chosen to bring into the world the only-begotten Son of the

Father. Because of this wonderful destiny she was exempted from the stain of original sin. She was ever a virgin. She was ever sinless. She used perfectly the graces with which God endowed her soul, and to her has been given the most exalted degree of heavenly glory that any creature may receive. Her intercession is all-powerful with her divine Son, for she is His Mother; and that intercession is made in our behalf, for we are her children.

How reasonable, then, and how beautiful is our Church's devotion to Mary, our "beautiful lady," for that is the meaning of her sweet name! Well may we honor her and hail her as our heavenly queen! May we, her children, invoke the constant aid of her who is the Mother of Him from whom all graces come! Well may we beseech her to "pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death!" And when that hour shall have come and gone, when this earthly life of ours is ended, may you and I, dear reader, enjoy in heaven the everlasting love of Mary our Mother!

Chapter XI

SIN AND REDEMPTION

WE have seen that through the disobedience of our first parents sin came into the world. Their souls were deprived of the grace of God, and their descendants (with one glorious exception, the Blessed Mother of God) are born destitute of the gifts and graces which Adam possessed at his creation. More than that, the nature of man, by that first fall, became inclined to evil, prone to sin.

The Nature of Sin. What is sin? It is a transgression of the law of God, a revolt against Him and His supreme authority. That transgression, that revolt, may consist in a thought, a word, a deed, or an omission. It is truly a revolt, an act of treason against our King; for when a man sins he makes a choice between God on the one hand and some forbidden self-gratification on the other, and deliberately chooses the latter in preference to God. This insult to the Divine Majesty deserves punishment from God's justice, unless it be repented of by man and pardoned by God.

Sin is of two kinds, original and actual; and there is a great difference between them. One comes to us because we are of Adam's race, not through any fault of our own. The other is the result of our own guilty desire for something which God's law forbids; something which we do of our own free will against the will of God.

Original Sin. What is original sin? It is that in which we are born, that which stains our soul at our birth, because we are children of Adam. It is thus named because it goes back to the origin of our race, because we are descendants of that first pair who disobeyed God's command in Eden. "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed

on all men." That inherited sin consists in this: that we are born deprived of sanctifying grace. In that state we are objects of God's wrath, and have no claim to the joys of heaven. Were it not for the lamentable fall of our first parents, you and I and the rest of mankind would have been born in holiness, in what the theologians call "original justice." God, indeed, forgave the sin of Adam; but He did not restore the gifts which Adam had possessed before his fall. A darkened mind, an enfeebled will, an inclination to evil, subjection to the sway of sensual passions—such are some of the penalties which Adam's fall brought upon all his posterity. And even when the stain of original sin was removed from your soul and mine, when we were restored to grace and received the right to eternal glory, the gifts bestowed on our first father were not restored to us. Ignorance and weakness, alas! are still our portion.

How is this stain removed from the soul of man? God's mercy and providence have provided different means at different times. During the early centuries of our race, before the giving of the law to the Hebrew people, there was some religious ceremony which, by manifesting the faith of parents in the Redeemer to come, cleansed the souls of their children from original sin; but the nature of that ceremony is not known. In the law as given to Moses, a special religious act was prescribed for this purpose by God Himself, the rite of circumcision. And in the more perfect and more spiritual law which Jesus Christ taught to the world, He instituted a special sacrament to bring the soul of fallen man back to reconciliation with his God. That sacrament is Baptism.

The Fate of the Unbaptized. What becomes of the souls of those who do not receive Baptism, who die in a state of original sin, but have not offended God by actual sin? There are the children who perish unborn, those who die unbaptized, in infancy; those who live to adult age, but who never have the use of reason, and have never received Baptism. Do they go to heaven? No; for they do not possess the holiness which is necessary for the enjoyment of the vision of God; the stain on their souls shuts them out of heaven forever. Are they sent to hell? No; they them-

selves have not sinned against God; and hell is intended for those who have deserved it by deliberate, grievous, unrepented sin.

Where will these spend their eternity? In a place or state to which theologians have given the name of the "limbo or paradise of children." They will undergo no punishment, no flames, no torments; for it is not hell. They will not enjoy the beatific vision of God; for it is not heaven. They will have a natural knowledge of God and a love of Him above all things, but they will be deprived forever of the glory and happiness which are the portion of the saints. They will have no temptations and no trials. They will have natural happiness which will satisfy them, and which will never end; but it will not be the happiness of heaven.

Actual Sin. Just as Adam rebelled against God by an act of his free will, so can we. Even after the stain of original sin has been blotted from our souls, even after we have been restored to the grace and love of God, we can incur another stain; we can separate ourselves again from that grace and that love. And this we do by actual sin.

It is a human act which is contrary to God's law. A "human act" is one that is produced by the intellect and free will of man. It may not be an external action; it may be merely a thought or desire, not manifested in any external way, but evolved by the mind and consented to by the will. If such an act be against God's law, it is a sin. As the Catechism tells us: "Actual sin is any thought, word, deed or omission contrary to the law of God."

Thus a mere thought against that law will be sinful, and it may be a very grievous sin, although it leads to no sinful action. A word, which is our mode of expressing thought, will be sinful if that which it reveals is sinful. A deed will be a sin if it is the result of a sinful desire or intention, and not otherwise. For example, the killing of a man is sinful when murder is intended; under other circumstances it may be entirely justifiable and not sinful at all; for instance, when death is inflicted as a deserved penalty according to law, or when it is meted out to an unjust aggressor who menaces our life or liberty or property. And

lastly, we can sin literally "when we do nothing," that is, by omission, by wilfully neglecting to do something which is required of us by God's law.

Mortal and Venial. Sin varies in degrees. That is, all sins are not equal in wickedness. Some have far more malice than others, and therefore are deserving of greater punishment.

Some sins are of such enormity that they "deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, which is its life," as the Catechism says. These, consequently, are called mortal sins, because they destroy that "life of the soul." They do not actually kill the soul, for it is immortal; but they render it loathsome in God's sight, just as a dead and corrupted body is loathsome in ours.

In order that a sin may be mortal, it is necessary that its "matter" shall be of grave importance, and that the sinful thought or word or deed or omission be committed "with sufficient reflection"; that is, with deliberation and with full knowledge that it is against God's law, and "with full consent of the will," which freely chooses to do that forbidden thing.

Other sins are of less gravity; they do not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, although they lessen it. And because these are more easily pardoned by God's mercy, they are called "venial" (from the Latin word *venia,* meaning pardon). A sin is venial when the disobedience to God's law is in a matter of minor importance, or when, in a grave matter, there is not "sufficient reflection or full consent of the will."

Mortal sins vary in malice. Some are worse than others, manifesting more flagrant rebellion against God, or doing greater injury to our neighbor. Some sins break only one command of God, and the malice of these is, therefore, of one kind only. Others transgress more than one law, and their malice is correspondingly manifold.

Let us illustrate this. A wilful impure act, the outcome of an impure desire, is a sin, having one kind of malice. If by that act another person is led into sin, it has a twofold malice. If the sinner is married, another kind of wickedness is added; and if his accomplice is likewise married, there is another and deeper degree

of guilt. If one or both are under a religious vow, their guilt is even greater, and the sin becomes a sacrilege. And so it is, to some degree, with other kinds of mortal sins.

Venial sins also differ one from another in guilt. For example, an unkind thought is usually not so sinful as an unkind word, for it does less harm. The theft of a cent is obviously a smaller sin than the theft of a dollar; the loss to the owner is of less consequence. And these sins vary also according to the amount of reflection and consent with which they are committed.

The Penalty of Sin. Mortal sin deserves the punishment of eternal fire, eternal separation from God; and unless it be repented of and forgiven, such will be its inevitable penalty. Venial sin does not merit such severity. If unrepented and unforgiven, God's justice will inflict a punishment of lesser degree and duration, which we call purgatory.

The scope of this work is to explain the doctrines of our Catholic faith; therefore we shall not enter into the teachings of theology concerning the species of sins, the various ways in which we may offend God. That is the province of the moral teaching of our Church, and we are discussing dogma.

Conscience. God has given to each of us a guide, a monitor, by which we can know the goodness or badness of our acts. This guide is our conscience, the judgment of our reason concerning our actions. It is well called "a still, small voice," speaking to the soul of every man, bringing remorse when we have fallen, and happiness when we have been true to God.

Our conscience performs its work more or less effectually in proportion to our knowledge. When we know a law and sin against it, our conscience shows the evil we have done. "To him therefore who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is a sin" (James iv. 27). But if, through no fault of ours, we are ignorant of a law, the transgression of that law cannot be a sin for us, because there is no knowledge or consciousness or intention of ill-doing.

Temptation. One of the penalties of the fall of Adam was that he and his descendants were to be exposed to temptation. The

powers of evil are permitted by God to allure us to sin. "Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist ye strong in faith." The Latin poet Ovid said a true thing when he declared: "I see and approve the better, but I seek the worse." Alas! we of a later day, with far greater graces than poor pagan Ovid, must often confess that we are as weak as he was.

Why does God allow us to be tempted? For the same reason that He permitted the temptation of Adam in Eden: that He may test the faithfulness of His creatures; that we, possessing free will, may have the opportunity of serving Him voluntarily; that we may gain victories over Satan and our own passions, and thereby win merit for our souls. His grace is given abundantly to us when we need it and seek it; and that grace is stronger than any temptation. Satan has no more power over us than we ourselves give him. We have free will, the power to do the right and reject the wrong; and God's all-sufficient grace is always ours for the asking. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will also with temptation make issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x, 13).

We may be tempted, also, by our own corrupted nature, without suggestion from the prince of evil. Our own sensual passions are our worst enemy. This is concupiscence, the depraved desire of our carnal nature for sinful things, resulting from the sin of Adam. "Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence. . . . Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. But sin, when it is completed, begetteth death" (James i. 14). "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and making me captive to sin" (Rom. vii. 23).

Concupiscence is a part of the penalty imposed on fallen man. We inherit it from Adam. Grace and prayer and perseverance in well-doing will lessen it; but all through our life it will be with us, a constant danger, calling for continual vigilance and prayer.

Redemption. "Behold the lamb of God; behold him who taketh away the sins of the world." Thus does the Church, in

her ritual, echo the words of the great saint who came to "prepare the way of the Lord."

The saving of mankind is the crowning mercy of God. Man, having fallen away from his high estate by Adam's sin, was totally unable to restore himself to God's love or to repair the insult offered to God's majesty. He needed redemption; and the infinite mercy of God provided for that need. A Saviour was sent into the world, and He was none other than the incarnate Son of God.

This is the greatest mystery of our holy faith. God Himself has come to redeem us. He whom we rejected has sought us and brought us back to His love. Our sinful race rebelled against Him; and He became a man like us, and suffered and died that He might restore to us our eternal heritage.

Was it necessary that our Redeemer should be God? No. This matter has been discussed in a previous chapter, but we may emphasize it by repeating it. God might have pardoned man without sending a Redeemer, or He might have sent an angel to restore our fallen race. But His love for us—that undeserved and incomprehensible love—urged Him to perform a mystery of mercy which is entirely beyond the scope of our intellect. The Second Person of the Trinity, being God, wished to take our sins upon Himself, wished to be a sacrificial victim for our salvation. That He might do this, He became man; He lived among us and died for us, that we, knowing His love and His sufferings, might thereby be led to love Him in return.

If our Saviour were God alone, He could not thus have expiated the guilt of man; for God can neither suffer nor die. But a divine Person who is man as well as God could offer such atonement. As man, He could suffer; as God, His sufferings would be of infinite merit. "There is one God, and one mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5).

For You and Me. The sufferings of our Saviour, being infinitely meritorious, are applied by Him to all mankind and to each individual soul. They are yours and mine, dear reader, as if they had been endured solely for you and me. Our blessed

Redeemer died for you; He died for me; as if you or I were the only one who needed redemption. As St. Paul says: "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

But these sufferings, though of infinite merit, do not effect the remission of all the punishment due to sin. The sacrifice of Calvary atoned for the guilt of all the sins of mankind, but we ourselves must expiate their temporal punishment. The eternal penalty was cancelled by the death of our Saviour; a certain amount of lesser and temporary penalty often remains, however, and we must suffer thereby. Moreover, the other consequences of man's first transgression, ignorance, weakness of will, sorrow, sickness, death, trials and temptations, are still a burden which we, a fallen race, must bear throughout our earthly life. To bear it patiently, to win our heavenly reward, we need the *grace of God;* and the nature and qualities of that great gift of the divine mercy will be considered in our next chapter.

Chapter XII

GRACE

THUS far, in the development of this explanation of our Catholic belief, we have been considering the things of faith, as it were, externally. We have spoken of creation, of the fall of man, and of the Saviour who restored to us our heritage. In this chapter we shall enter into the inner nature of Christianity and seek for the underlying cause and method of the sanctification which that Saviour effected.

Let me quote a passage from a sermon-book by a German priest: "If we were wholly ignorant of the doctrine and the history of Christianity, and saw nothing but its fruit, surely we should be aware that this fruit has been borne by no earthly tree, but by one whose roots are fast in the soil of heaven. . . . In the moral world, Christianity has created a new race of men—the Saints. . . . The spiritual world has been transformed by it. And it has achieved also a blessed transformation in the social world. It has taught men that they are all children of one Father who is in heaven, and that thus man belongs not only to an earthly but to a heavenly kingdom. . . . In a true sense and in the best sense, Christianity has been the mother of liberty, equality and fraternity" (Hansjakob, *Sermons on Grace*).

As we have seen in previous chapters, when our first parents fell away from their allegiance to God by a sin of disobedience, the gifts which He had given to them were mostly lost, both by them and their descendants. But God in His infinite mercy sent a Redeemer, His only-begotten Son. Through His coming and His sacrifice we have been restored to our inheritance. That infinite atonement offered by the incarnate God brings to the soul

of man not only a renewed right to heaven, but also the helps which are needed that he may attain to that glorious destiny.

The Supernatural State. While it is true that by our natural reason alone we can know that there is a God and can have some idea of His greatness, the knowledge of His true majesty and holiness is far beyond our natural capacity; and as for being reconciled with Him, or being sanctified by Him, or practising virtues which will please Him, these can never be within our reach unless we are supernaturally aided by a gift from God. And this we call *grace.*

Mere human knowledge and mere human virtue cannot lead to eternal reward. A man may be good and generous, possessed of great virtues in the natural order; and yet he cannot win heaven, he cannot see God, unless he has been raised to a state which is called "supernatural"—superior to nature—because it is far above the state in which his nature places him.

Man's Destiny. "God made me to know Him and love Him and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven." Such is my duty, such is my destiny. Can I fulfill the duty and attain to the destiny by my own unaided powers? No. I need the gift which is called *grace,* by which I am elevated far above my natural state. Without that gift, man cannot know or serve God in such a way or to such a degree as to deserve eternal happiness. The privilege of beholding the beatific vision of God, of seeing Him face to face forever, belongs to no creature unless God gives it. We have no claim, of ourselves, to that everlasting bliss nor to the means of obtaining it. That eternal destiny is ours only because God grants it to us, because our blessed Saviour won it for us on the cross of Calvary.

What Is Grace? Let us make a comparison. Grace is like the sun, which vivifies the world with its light and heat. Just as this earth, if deprived of the blessed sunlight, would sink into the icy coldness of death, so our supernatural life would end without the God-given gift which bears the name of grace. Its source is the Saviour, Jesus Christ, of whom the Evangelist said: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true

light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" (John i. 5, 9). And our Saviour proclaimed Himself as the source of grace for all mankind: "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me walketh not in darkness" (John viii. 12). Saint Augustine gives us a beautiful definition of grace, describing it as "an inflowing of divine love influencing us to do the good we know."

The word *grace* has many meanings. It signifies anything that is freely given: favor, bounty, pardon; thanksgiving for favors received; beauty of form or movement. But in a doctrinal sense it is "an inner supernatural help bestowed on us by God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation." It is our bond of membership with Christ. It means the gifts which are added to the gifts of creation, the supernatural favors by which God raises us from servitude and makes us His children.

These are indeed gifts, coming not only from God's goodness but from His mercy. Fallen man had no claim upon them; more than that, he is positively unworthy of them. When grace was given to Adam at his creation, he had no right to it. It was a pure gift of God's goodness. When he fell, he lost it; and God's justice might have exacted eternal privation of that gift and eternal separation from Himself. But His mercy was infinite. He restored man to grace through the merits of the sacrifice of His Son, our Saviour. "Not by works of justice we had done, but according to mercy he saved us" (Tit. iii. 5). "God, who is rich in mercy, of his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in our sins, hath quickened us together in Christ, and made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 4-6).

It was grace that moved the fishermen of Gennesareth to leave all things and follow Christ; that inspired them to go forth and teach all nations; that made the martyrs brave and steadfast even to death; that raised to heights of heroic virtue the men and women of every century whom we honor as saints of God. Well did Saint Paul, one of the greatest of them, declare: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

All that the world has seen of love, of mercy, of self-denial, of humility, of patience, of repentance, of forgiveness, has come through the grace of God. Every prayer that we utter, every deed that we do to please God, has as its cause the grace which He has given to us through the incarnation and the atonement. As Saint John said in his first Epistle, "we know that the Son of God is come; and he hath given us understanding that we may know the true God and may be in his true Son. This is the true God and life eternal" (v. 20).

The Necessity of Grace. Without grace, salvation is impossible. How clearly this is shown in many passages of Holy Writ! "No man can come to me except my Father draw him" (John vi. 44). "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 4, 5). "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

We see clearly, then, from these texts of the inspired word of God, that grace is absolutely necessary for salvation; we see also that it comes, and can only come, from the mercy of God, who has compassion on our fallen nature. He offers to all men a wonderful gift that elevates them to a supernatural rank and dignity. Man may accept this gift or reject it, for he has free will; he is not under compulsion. Rejection entails eternal separation from God, the loss of salvation. Acceptance elevates him to a state which renders him an object of God's love; by perseverance in God's service during this earthly life he becomes worthy of everlasting happiness with Him in the life to come.

The Kinds of Grace. Theologians divide grace, first of all, into "outward" and "inward." The former means all the things which God has done outwardly, or which His ministers do, for our salvation or spiritual benefit, such as, for example, the establishing of the Church, the institution and administration of the sacraments, the preaching of the Gospel and the working of miracles. "Inward grace" signifies the interior gifts which God

bestows, the supernatural favors which He imparts to the soul of man.

There is a grace which moves our will to act, the first impulse given to us to think a good thought or to do a good action. This is called the *gratia praeveniens,* or "antecedent grace," the one that comes first of all; sometimes clumsily translated as "preventing grace," though its meaning and its purpose are just the opposite of the present meaning of prevention. There is the "grace of perseverance," the divinely given help which enables us to go on from grace to grace until we attain heaven and God. These two species of grace, that first impulse to good and that gift of final perseverance, cannot be merited by us in any way whatever. They are pure gifts of God, and will need a word of explanation further on.

The Catechism tells us that there are two great classes of grace, sanctifying and actual. It defines them, briefly and adequately: "Sanctifying grace is that grace which makes the soul holy and pleasing to God." "Actual grace is that help of God which enlightens our mind and moves our will to shun evil and to do good."

In order to render the soul of man pleasing in His sight, God *abides* within it; this is sanctifying grace. He *acts* upon it; this is actual grace. The first is the state of the soul when it is in union with God, when it is possessed by the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier. The second is the action of the same Spirit of God upon the soul, to bring about or to increase that union and possession.

Sanctifying grace, which is the condition of the soul when mortal sin is absent, is by nature permanent; that is, nothing but grave sin can destroy it, or disrupt the union of the soul with its Creator. Actual grace is, as it were, transitory. It consists in the strength and aid which God gives to us, daily and hourly, as we need them, to bring us to a state of sanctifying grace or to increase that grace in our souls. It is a constantly proffered assistance given by God to our will, that we may choose aright. That will of ours is free; we can choose the wrong even when we

know the right; but the Almighty gives His graces always not only sufficiently but abundantly, that our intellect may know the right more clearly and that our will may correspond perfectly with the will of God.

Regeneration. How wonderful is the supernatural work which God performs in the soul of man! Take the case of one whose soul is in the state of mortal sin. God begins the regeneration of that soul by touching the heart through the illumination of the Holy Ghost. He suggests a holy thought; He strengthens the will by grace, that it may choose to abandon evil and return to His love. This is the "antecedent grace" of which we have already made mention. We cannot deserve this; it is a pure gift of God. The choosing rests with us. God does not compel the will to make a decision. He leaves it free. We can accept or reject His bounty. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come to him" (Apoc. iii. 20). We can refuse to admit Him, or we can open the door of our heart to Him by the assent of our will. God will then give us further help, guiding us onward to perfect union with Himself; this is called "subsequent" or "cooperating" grace, because it is the result of our cooperation with the designs of God. Then grace after grace is given to us, each bestowed because of our acceptance of previous graces. When sin has been cleansed from our soul, when we have become temples of the Holy Spirit by sanctifying grace, God continues to shower actual graces upon us, that we may not relapse into sin, but may persevere and advance in holiness.

Sufficient and Efficacious. God offers to every man sufficient grace for salvation. "He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). But all the grace that He gives will have no effect, will not be "efficacious grace," as the theologians say, unless we, of our own free will, accept it and use it. This shows us the meaning of the terms "sufficient grace" and "efficacious grace," which have been the subject of endless discussion and argument among theological writers for centuries. God gives each of us all the help that we

need, a sufficient quantity for salvation. Whether it profits us or not, whether it is efficacious or not, depends on our cooperation with His holy will.

Perseverance. Why does God show such generosity to us when we have made ourselves His enemies by sin? Because He loves us, because He has destined us to everlasting happiness, to the possession and enjoyment of Him forever in His heavenly kingdom. That immortal destiny we cannot attain unless He gives us the grace of final perseverance.

This, as we have said, is a grace which we can in no way merit. It is and must be a pure gift of God. Still, if we strive to use well the daily actual graces which He bestows, we may confidently hope that He will guide us to that crowning mercy.

We have all found, in our spiritual experiences, that the obtaining of sanctifying grace is not the hardest part of the work of salvation. Perseverance in well-doing is far more difficult. It is not hard to be sorry for our sins, nor to make "a firm purpose of amendment." The difficulty is in keeping that purpose firm. Unless God's powerful grace is daily sought and accepted, we easily become wearied of virtue and relapse into vice. Our nature is, of itself, weak and changeable; the enemy of our salvation is continually assailing us; and, unless we accept the sufficient grace which God always offers and thus make it efficacious, we shall inevitably fail in the conflict. And even then, for eternal salvation, we need the unmerited and unmeritable grace of final perseverance. God, indeed, has promised this to us: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Apoc. ii. 10); but even St. Paul, the zealous Apostle, specially called by God, feared lest he, after all his labors for others, might himself become a castaway.

For Ourselves and for Others. God, then, is the giver of grace. We can receive it from none but Him. He bestows it for the sanctifying of the soul of each of us, and increases it to make the soul more and more pleasing to Him. This the theologians call *gratia gratum faciens*—grace which makes one pleasing. To some, that they may assist others to draw nearer to God, He im-

parts another set of graces—*gratia gratis data,* grace freely given—by which they may have the power of bringing sanctification to others; and this kind of grace they may have and use even though they themselves may be destitute of sanctifying grace. Our blessed Saviour Himself tells us that at the day of judgment many will say: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and in thy name have done many miracles? And then I will profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

The Channels of Grace. All the graces which we receive come to us because of the atoning sacrifice of Calvary. God bestows them on account of the saving merits of Jesus Christ. They are transmitted to us, first of all, through prayer. This is the one essential channel of grace, so necessary that without it a rational man cannot be saved. After the first spontaneous aid which God gives to us of His own bounty and mercy, we must seek further graces; and the way to seek them is to ask for them. Prayer is the act of homage which man offers to God as the Lord of all things, and by which he acknowledges his dependence on His Creator and seeks His bounty.

Let us say a word here about this wondrous privilege which the Almighty has given to us, His unworthy creatures.

Prayer is the abstracting of our mind from the "things of sense" around us, and the directing of it to God and the supernatural, in order to honor Him and to present to Him our petitions. After all the blessings which He bestows on us spontaneously, there are many other things for which He wishes us to pray. Why? That we may realize that we are His creatures, and that all graces and blessings and mercies must come from Him. He is the source of all that we have and all that we hope for. And as we are His creatures, He wishes that we shall be ever filled with sentiments of adoration, thanksgiving and praise, and shall send up petitions for the things we need. There are countless favors that, in the designs of God's providence, will be granted to us only in answer to prayer.

When we offer the "prayer of petition" to God, will we always

obtain what we ask? Not necessarily, but one thing is certain: that anyone who addresses himself to God with the proper dispositions will not fail to win a blessing from Him. "At the voice of thy cry, as soon as he shall hear, he shall answer thee" (Isaias xxx. 19). And our blessed Saviour has told us: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you" (John xvi. 23). But we too often pray for mere worldly things, which may be harmful to the higher interests of ourselves or of others; and such things will not be given to us. "You ask and you receive not, because you ask amiss" (James iv. 3). If our prayer is for something really useful, really profitable to our soul, and if it is offered with confidence and perseverance and humility, we are certain to receive what we pray for, or something as good or better.

If we come before God with a consciousness of our own demerits and of His boundless goodness, we may ask for wondrous gifts, and we will not ask in vain. There is no temptation that will not yield to prayer; there is no grace that will not come to us if we pray aright, with humility, with earnestness, with perseverance. "And he spoke also a parable to them, that we ought always to pray" (Luke xviii. 1). Every day of our lives we stand in urgent need of God's saving grace; therefore, in the words of Saint Paul, "let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."

The second channel by which grace comes to the soul is provided mostly through the ministry of God's Church. It consists mainly in her holy sacraments. These are necessary, indeed, but not wholly necessary. A man may be beyond the reach of the sacraments, far from priest or church, and then he may be saved without them; but he is never beyond the reach of prayer, which is absolutely necessary for salvation for all who have come to the use of reason.

These, then, are the two great means of sanctification, the channels through which God's grace comes to the soul of man: *prayer,* which is communion with God, and *the sacraments,* which have been instituted by Him to impart grace to the human soul.

A lesser and indirect means of grace, always useful, is found in the pious objects and practices used and approved by the Church and known as sacramentals. These have been thoroughly treated in the author's other works, *The Externals of the Catholic Church* and *The Visible Church,* as well as in many books by other writers.

God has indeed made the work of sanctification easy for us. We can pray anywhere and at any time, and our prayer will be always heard by Him. He has provided sacraments by which His sanctifying grace is imparted to us or increased within us, and by which actual graces are abundantly bestowed to help us in the ceaseless conflict with Satan and sin. His holy Church has devised many things that appeal to the senses, exciting within us good thoughts and a spirit of devotion. May we all use these various means of grace, faithfully and well. May the sufficient grace given by God be made always efficacious because we accept and use it. And when this life is over, grace will give place to glory. The gifts bestowed on us here are only a faint foreshadowing of the eternal reward which His infinite love has prepared for those who have served Him well in their earthly lives and have made good use of the graces which He gave to guide them onward to their immortal destiny.

Chapter XIII

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

THUS far we have been considering and explaining doctrines which are mostly accepted and believed by all Christian denominations. The unity and trinity of God, the creation and the fall of man, the redemption, effected through the incarnation of the Son of God—these are the common property of all who have any claim to be considered Christians.

But now we come to the points of doctrine wherein there is disagreement and dissension. We Catholics hold that God established on earth a society, a visible body, which we call the Church. We believe that the Church is an infallible teacher and guide, given to us by God that we may know with absolute certainty the truths revealed by Him to men. We believe that it is a *visible* Church and a *universal* Church; visible, because men must seek it; universal, because through it all men are to find salvation. We hold that, being a visible Church, it must have a visible head, a ruler, and that he is a direct successor of that Apostle who was chosen by the Saviour as the rock upon which His Church was to be built. We believe, therefore, that he who holds that exalted office is the vicar, the vice-gerent of Christ upon earth, and that when he teaches the doctrine of Christ or His moral law he is divinely preserved from error. And we believe that actual membership in that Church is necessary to salvation, at least for those who have knowledge of and access to it.

A Living Teacher. Our blessed Saviour came upon earth to offer a sacrifice of atonement, but that was not His only purpose. He wished to teach the saving truths of God to men, not by the written word only, as contained in the New Testament, inspired by Him and given to the world through His Apostles and

Evangelists as a completion and perfecting of what the Old Testament had taught, and not merely by tradition, which hands down His words and works from generation to generation. He established another means, far more effective than either of these, a teaching society which would preserve and interpret both Testaments, and which would have a continuous and truthful tradition, handed on from age to age; a society which will live and labor as long as this world shall endure; which is and will always be infallible, free from error in the doctrine which it professes, and incapable of erring when it teaches that doctrine to mankind.

That living, infallible teacher is the Church of God. Its mission is to perpetuate the divine work of Jesus Christ for the regeneration of the world; to continue and diffuse His teaching, that all mankind may know His faith and His law; to be God's messenger to man, "the pillar and ground of truth."

The Kingdom of God. The founder of the Church was none other than our Blessed Lord, the Saviour of the world, "who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kingdom and priests to God and his Father" (Apoc. i. 5, 6). He has indeed loved us, and He loves the Church which He has given us as our guide. He watches over that Church with untiring, eternal solicitude. "He delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25, 27).

Our Saviour came to teach a new and more perfect law, to make a full and final revelation of God's will to man. For that purpose He founded a society, a Church, by which His teachings would be perpetuated, by which His Commandments would be enforced, and by which the means of salvation might be made accessible to all men until the end of time. Well is that Church called the immaculate spouse, the kingdom of God, the new Jerusalem, the mystical body of Christ! "For there is one body, and it has many members; but all the members, although they be many, yet are one body; so also is Christ. For in one spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free" (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13).

How sublime are the words of the prophets of old when they speak of the kingdom which the coming of the Messias was to found upon earth! "A king shall reign," said Jeremias; "and he shall be wise, and shall execute justice and judgment on the earth" (xxiii. 5). Daniel speaks even more clearly concerning that future kingdom, emphasizing its permanency: "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and it shall break to pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand forever" (ii. 44). This testimony is repeated and reaffirmed by the archangel of the annunciation: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33).

The Apostles. When our Blessed Lord had begun His public life, He laid the foundations of His Church. He chose certain men who were to be instructed in His doctrine that they might afterwards teach others. "Having called the twelve together, he gave them power" (Matt. x. 1). He had other followers also, who were to be the laity of His Church. "Going up into a mountain, he called unto him whom he would; and they came to him" (Mark iii. 12). They were to be members of His Church, but not teachers in it, as we learn from the next words of the evangelist: "And he made that the twelve should be with him, and that he might send them to preach." Here we have the nucleus of the Church: priests and people; pastors and flock; clergy and laity.

The Visible Head. In any society there must be a head, a leader, if it is to remain a united body. If that society is national, it needs a national head. If it claims to be catholic, or universal; that is, existing in all parts of the world, it must have a visible head acknowledged as supreme by its members in all lands; and, more than this, if it is universal in the sense of enduring throughout all ages, it must necessarily have a series of heads coming down in direct succession, without interruption, from its beginning.

How did our blessed Saviour provide for this need? He chose one of the Apostles, Simon, who was called Cephas, and He gave

him primacy or precedence over the rest. He Himself was about to leave this world, and in order to preserve unity of faith and government after His departure, He made this Apostle the foundation-stone of His Church. "Thou art Peter [that is, a rock]; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

"Feed my lambs; feed my sheep" (John xxi. 15, 17). Peter was to be the shepherd of the flock of Christ. He was to nourish them with the food of God's word, to rule and guide them, to seek the sheep that had gone astray. He was made the supreme ruler of the Church, in order that there might be always one fold and one shepherd.

The proofs of the primacy of Peter and the infallibility possessed and exercised by Him and his successors will be considered in subsequent chapters of this book.

The Work of the Apostles. Even during our Lord's life His Apostles exercised their ministry. He sent them to preach and to teach, to practise and train themselves, as it were, in preparation for the mighty future work which lay before them. "Going, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. x. 8). And after our Saviour had risen from the dead, He gave them the glorious commission which made them truly His Apostles. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Such was the authorization which Jesus gave to His chosen ones. Such was their mission, to "teach all nations," which means that His truth is for all men, and that His Church is to be the teacher of that truth to all the world. "Baptizing them," which is the conferring of membership in that Church; and the work of

increasing that membership, of extending the Church's domain, must go on until "all nations" shall rest within its fold. This Baptism is to be administered in the name of the three persons of the Trinity; for the society to which it admits us is not a human society merely; it is divine in its origin, divine in its teachings. It is to perpetuate the work of redemption, to bring the knowledge of God's love and God's law to all for whom He died, "teaching them to observe all things" which He has commanded. It is to carry on that glorious work throughout all future ages, aided and protected and inspired by its divine founder, that the truths of His holy faith may be taught to generations yet unborn. For He declared: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Such is the history of the founding of God's kingdom on earth. Such was the beginning of the Catholic Church, instituted by Him to be, through all the succeeding ages, the guide of mankind unto salvation.

The Spirit of God. A mighty task lay before the Apostles. They were to be the teaching body of the Church, but it needed a soul as well, that it might be a living and life-giving Church. Its body was formed when the Apostles were chosen and commissioned; its soul was to be none other than the Holy Spirit of God, the Third Person of the adorable Trinity. "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another paraclete, that he may abide with you and shall be in you" (John xiv. 16, 17). And so, after the ascension of our Saviour into heaven, that promised paraclete came, in a mighty wind and tongues of fire; the first as a figure of the Spirit of God who is breathed into our souls through the sacramental ministration of that Church, and the second as a fitting symbol of the fire of charity which was to be enkindled in the hearts of men by her preaching. Such was the soul, the vivifying Spirit, which God breathed into His Church on Pentecost, her natal day.

The Church of the Ages. With the coming of the Holy Ghost the Church's growth began. The little grain of mustard-seed had been planted, and soon came the increase. The Apostles

went forth and preached "Jesus Christ and him crucified" in the midst of the people who had put Him to death only fifty days before; and many heard and believed. Then they began their labors for the Gentile nations of the earth, for the message of salvation was to be brought to all. They divided the world among them. "Their words went to the ends of the earth," and "the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved" (Acts ii. 47). Fearlessly they labored, bravely they died. Others took up the task, filled with the same divine Spirit that had animated the first leaders of our Church. The mighty power of the great Roman Empire strove to destroy the kingdom of Christ; but the Empire perished, and the kingdom remains. "When the sea of blood ebbed back from the rock of Peter, that rock stood firmer than before." The faith of Christ was carried to the pagan tribes of Europe, and then to the remotest parts of the earth.

All this is a matter of history, not of dogma; and it is not within the province of this work to enter into details except in the things that pertain directly to Catholic faith. That Church, founded by our Saviour, vivified by the Holy Spirit of God, built upon the rock of Peter, sanctified by the blood of martyrs and the holiness of saints, stands before the world a visible Church, the teacher of God's truth to men, the holy city of God.

Chapter XIV

THE PRIMACY OF PETER

"THE Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same sacraments, and are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible head." Thus does the Catechism define and describe the society which our blessed Saviour instituted to teach His truths to men and to lead them to eternal life.

The work of Jesus was not to end with Himself. To supply His place after His ascension into heaven, to carry on His mission of salvation, He chose certain men who are known as "Apostles" (which signifies "those sent forth"). These He instructed and prepared for a mighty work, to "teach all nations." They were privileged to be His companions, to learn the truths of faith from the source of all truth. They received the power of offering the sacrifice of the New Law, to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, that the atoning sacrifice of Calvary might be continued in a mystical manner until the end of time. They were sent forth into the pagan world accredited as messengers of God, and all mankind was put under an obligation of learning the truths of God from their preaching. "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me" (Luke x. 16).

The Mission of the Apostles. The commission given to the Apostles was similar to that which our Blessed Lord had received from His eternal Father. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this he breathed upon them and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John xx. 21-23). Thus did they receive the Spirit of God; and the gifts of that Spirit were intensified in them at a

later day, when He descended upon them in the miracle of Pentecost.

A further warrant was given to the chosen twelve by their divine Master, the power to teach and baptize, with the assurance of His perpetual care and protection. "All power is given to me, in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

The Nature of the Church. From this commission we can see what the Church of God was to be. It was planned by its founder as a visible society, under the leadership of certain persons who had received special power and authority. Under them, and subject to that authority, were to be others, who would receive knowledge of divine truths and access to the means of grace and salvation through the teaching and ministry of these messengers of God. And He who sent them has put upon all mankind, as a condition of salvation, an obligation to accept the truth which they teach, because it is the truth of God. He requires submission to their authority because that authority is from Him; they are His Apostles, the bearers of His message of salvation to sinful man.

The teaching body which He thus established and commissioned was to be permanent, not temporary. Just as our Saviour Himself was not to remain on earth forever to carry on His work, neither were the Apostles, but the Church was to live after them. They were human; necessarily they would die; but their work was to continue and, therefore, they were to have successors. Our Lord did not merely promise to be with them till their death; His promise was that He would watch over their work "all days, even to the consummation of the world." He sent the Holy Ghost, the paraclete, the Spirit of truth, to comfort and teach them, and to preserve them from error; and that Spirit was to "abide with them forever."

A Visible Church. The Church of God is a society which is visible, working openly among men, not an invisible aggregation

of human souls, without external form or government, as some Protestant teachers have alleged; for as its rulers were to administer certain outward rites which we call sacraments (such as Baptism and the forgiveness of sins), and were to preach God's truth openly and with authority before all mankind, it is clear that the divine founder of the Church wished it to be a visible body. It is a society which is to bring knowledge and grace to all men, for its first leaders were to "teach all nations"; and admittance to membership in it is given through the sacrament of Baptism, an outward and visible rite. Now it is self-evident that the Apostles, during their short lives, could not bring God's message to all men, nor could they administer Baptism to all. It was necessary that the society of which they were the first leaders should continue to exist in visible form after their death, so that all mankind might seek it and be guided by it in their quest for truth and salvation.

Therefore there is a great, true, visible Church in this world of ours, teaching one faith to all. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." That Church was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ; it began its work through the ministry of His Apostles, and that work is carried on visibly and continuously by their successors, guarded and guided by Christ Himself, and taught by the Spirit of God, the paraclete, who abides with it forever.

The Prince of the Apostles. Among the companions of Jesus there was one who, in the designs of God, was to be raised to a position of supremacy over the others. Like them, he was of humble origin and avocation, a fisherman of Galilee, called from his nets to become "a fisher of men."

"And Jesus, looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter" (John i. 42). And later, "He asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the son of man is? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus, answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter; and

upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi).

Let us consider these words. What do they mean? Unmistakably, their signification is this: That Simon Peter was raised to a position of honor and jurisdiction superior to that of the other Apostles, a reward, in a sense, for his divinely inspired profession of faith. Upon him, according to our Lord's solemn declaration, the Church was to be built. He was to be the foundation-stone of that mighty edifice against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Many are the attempts made to explain away the obvious meaning of these words of Christ. For example, "By the words, 'upon this rock,' the Saviour meant Himself." If so, why did He address Simon and Simon only, to whom He had previously given the title of Peter, the rock? Again, "Christ meant the whole body of the faithful when He spoke of the rock upon which the Church was to be built." This is a manifest absurdity. The "whole body of the faithful" is the Church itself, the visible congregation of those who believe in Christ. God would not build His Church upon itself. Nor did He mean the Apostles. He was not speaking to them, but to one only, to the only one who had professed faith in His divinity, to the only one who could be called "the son of Jona," to the one who had already received from Him the title of Cephas, Peter, the rock.

The Primacy of Jurisdiction. Let us read further in that chapter of St. Matthew. "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." That "kingdom of heaven" is the Church, of which our Lord had just been speaking. The giving or mentioning of keys is a Scriptural way of denoting possession and power, as is shown in many passages of Holy Writ. Hence the giving of the keys to Peter meant the bestowing of supreme power, by which he was constituted the ruler of that kingdom, the vicar of Christ on earth. In other words, his primacy was not merely one of honor; it gave authority

and jurisdiction. He received the power "to bind and to loose," to rule all the other members of the Church, including even his companions, the other Apostles. All were to be subject to him. He was to be the centre of power and authority in the earthly kingdom of God.

Such was the office given to Peter; and the New Testament cites several instances wherein he exercised his power. The Evangelists, when they enumerate the Apostles, always place him first in the list. After the resurrection of Christ, Peter received a commission which was not given to the others: "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep" (John xxi. 5, etc.). He was to be the shepherd of the lambs; that is, of the faithful in general, and of the sheep, meaning the clergy and the bishops. The whole fold of Christ was to be under the care of the supreme pastor.

Read the Acts of the Apostles, that concise history of the earliest days of Christianity, and you will have convincing proof of the primacy of Peter. He was the leader at the election of Matthias, in the preaching to the Jews, at the condemnation of Ananias and Sapphira, in the calling of the Gentiles, and in the first general council of the Church at Jerusalem. Thus we see that Peter possessed and exercised supremacy in rank and authority above the other Apostles, just as his successor of to-day, after nineteen centuries, is preeminent over the other bishops of the Church of Christ.

The Popes of Rome. Our Saviour wished the primacy of Peter to continue in His Church. He wished that others should succeed that first pontiff, feeding the lambs and the sheep. These successors have governed the Church from the day when the first vicar of Christ died a martyr on the Vatican hill. They are the bishops of Rome, and we call them "popes." He who sits in the chair of Peter is the spiritual father of all the faithful, and that is the meaning of the word *pope*.

How do we know that the primacy of Peter was to continue? Because its purpose, its reason, was to continue. That purpose is the preservation of unity in faith, unity in government and discipline, in all ages until the end of time. How long would the

Church stand if the rock upon which Christ built it were removed?

All the Roman pontiffs, from St. Linus to Pius XI, have acted as successors of St. Peter, have claimed and exercised supremacy over the whole Catholic Church, and have been so recognized by Fathers and councils and by the whole Catholic world. Through the entire history of our Church the See of Rome has been the head and centre of her government; the successors of St. Peter have been her rulers, and there has been an unbroken line of pontiffs, teaching God's truth to men even as He taught it, teaching it always infallibly, without error, for they have been ever guided by the Holy Spirit of God, who was sent by the Church's founder to be her guardian forever.

If that supremacy were not from God, it could not have endured for nineteen centuries. If that Church were not divinely instituted, she could not have taught an unchanging doctrine. She could not have held the love and obedience of millions of men in every century. Although quoted so often that it has become trite, the famous passage from Macaulay is a magnificent tribute to the Papacy of the Catholic Church: "No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but as yesterday, when compared with the line of the supreme pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends. . . . The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and useful vigor. The Catholic Church saw the commencement of all the governments and all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. . . . She may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

Chapter XV

INFALLIBILITY

ONE Lord, one faith, one baptism. . . . And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors . . . that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephes. iv. 5, 14).

Every society must have a head. Every body of men united for mutual benefit or for combined action must have a centre of authority. An army would be a weak and futile defense for its fatherland unless over it there were a commander-in-chief. A kingdom would be exposed to disunion and anarchy, were it not for the central governing authority symbolized, if not exercised, by its king. Our American republic would not be one strong nation but many weak and disunited states if it had not a central government and the chief executive whom we call its President. Moreover, if any society is to be efficient, its leader or head must be fitted for his position; he must be able to govern and guide it so that it will produce the results which are its object, its reason for existence.

The Teacher of Truth. There is one society which has been instituted for a most important purpose: to teach the eternal truths of God to men, and thus to lead them to salvation. That society is the Church of Christ. It has a head. An Apostle was chosen by its founder as its first ruler. He and his successors were to be, throughout the centuries, its centre of authority, its guides in its saving work. Christ Himself is with that Church all days; and that it might be able always to teach God's truth effectively and without error, He sent the Holy Ghost, the paraclete, to abide

with it forever. That paraclete is the Spirit of truth; when the Church of Christ teaches mankind in matters of faith or morals, that Holy Spirit preserves it from error. Otherwise the Church would be unfit and unable to fulfill its destiny and purpose, to give to man a true knowledge of God's revelation and God's law.

In Faith and Morals. The Church is infallible. She cannot have in her system of doctrine anything that is not a truth of God. She cannot propose as true a doctrine that is false, nor condemn a doctrine as false when it is in reality true. She has the mark or quality of infallibility.

What do we mean by *infallible* and *infallibility?* Simply the gift of not erring. When we attribute it to the Church, it may be defined: a special providence or assistance given by God by which she is preserved from all error in belief or in teaching.

In the language of the theologians, infallibility may be passive or active. The Church possesses both. Passive infallibility means that she can never believe or profess error, even to the smallest degree, in anything pertaining to faith. In other words, the whole Church is infallible in her belief, so that it cannot happen that her members in general can ever believe or profess a false doctrine. Active infallibility is freedom from error in teaching. It has been given by God to "the body of pastors"; that is, to the bishops of the Church. That body, if assembled in council under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, cannot err in faith or in teaching; and even when dispersed throughout the world, it cannot teach universally or generally anything that is contrary to God's truth, even though individual bishops may err in doctrine; for Christ did not promise freedom from error to each member of the teaching body of His Church, but only to the whole body. A bishop may err; but all the bishops of the world, the "body of pastors," cannot profess or teach error.

"Ex Cathedra." This active form of infallibility is possessed especially by the one who is Christ's vicar on earth. When, in a matter of faith or morals, he speaks *ex cathedra,* that is, from the chair of Peter, as the supreme and universal teacher of God's revelation to mankind, he is divinely preserved from error in

proclaiming the truths of the Christian faith or in explaining and enforcing the moral law.

Therefore, if the Sovereign Pontiff, without holding a general council of bishops, defines a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the Church, he is infallible in so doing. If he summons such a council and confirms its decisions in doctrinal matters, such action of his is likewise infallible. And if he convokes a synod, or council of a part of the bishops, and afterwards extends its decrees to the whole Church, these decrees are then a part of the Christian faith, and the Pope is infallible in promulgating them.

No New Doctrines. Can the Pope, then, put forth doctrines that are entirely new? No. The Catholic faith, in the words of Holy Writ, has been "once delivered to the saints." It cannot be increased by the adding of new doctrines. The Vatican Council, which defined the doctrine of papal infallibility, declares: "The Holy Ghost was not promised to the successors of Peter in order that through His revelation they might manifest new doctrine, but that through His assistance they might religiously guard and faithfully expound the revelation handed down by the Apostles, or the deposit of faith."

The Church, then, unlike the prophets and the writers of Scripture, has no inspiration. She cannot receive new revelations and transmit them to us. Her work is to expound the original revelation, to combat and condemn errors against it, and to define God's truth so that it may be clearly recognized as such. The "deposit of faith" was given to the Apostles, but on many points there was obscurity, and Catholic dogmas were slowly clarified by time and by controversy. Heresies arose; these caused the Church to issue new and adequate expressions of the truth, making it clearer than it had been before, and showing that it was a part of the doctrine of Christ.

The infallibility of the Church, then, is exercised in defining truths already contained in Scripture and tradition. She is the sole interpreter of the written word of God. She is the sole custodian of divine tradition. And (according to the general opinion of theologians) she is infallible also in matters closely

connected with revealed truth. For example, she declares that a certain book is heretical. She is infallible in so doing, because she is the unerring judge of faith and of heresy, and she must be able, without mistake or error, to guard her children against false teachers. Again, in the canonizing of saints she cannot err. She would be leading her children into a species of false worship if she exacted religious veneration of a soul that is not in heaven. But in many things she is not infallible. She may be deceived in matters that are personal or historical: as to the guilt or innocence of a person whom she judges, as to the genuineness of documents, and in many similar things.

Can the Pope Err? When we say that the Pope is infallible, does it mean that he cannot make a mistake? By no means. He is human. His learning may be great or little, but even a learned man can err. The Pope might write a book full of errors, in matters of history or science. He might even produce theological treatises which might be faulty and inaccurate. In these things he is not preserved from error. It is only when he speaks as the head of Christ's Church, proclaiming and defining that Church's faith or promulgating God's moral law, that he is infallible, immune from error, because then he is divinely aided by the Holy Spirit of God.

When we say that the Pope is infallible, does it mean that he cannot sin? Far from it. He has understanding and free will; he can know the right and do the wrong; he needs God's grace, like other men—even more than other men; and he is obliged to confess his sins, even as you and I. Infallibility is not sinlessness. A Pope may be a wicked man, and if history sayeth true, there were a few, a very few, whose lives were unworthy of their sacred office; but as Pope, even though wicked, he is infallible in teaching the truths of God.

Let us make mention of a very remote but not an impossible contingency. Suppose that a Pope became a heretic. Suppose that he openly rejected a truth of faith, which he is bound to believe as much as we are. What would happen? Theologians in general maintain that thereby he would cease to be Pope, and that the

Church would have the right and power to judge him for his heresy. But we Catholics may well be assured that no such calamity will ever befall this holy Church of ours, which has its divine founder with it all days, and which is the abiding-place of the Spirit of God forever.

The Proofs of Infallibility. Do the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Church is infallible? Yes, by what we call deduction; that is, certain texts (which we have quoted in recent chapters) show us that Christ founded a visible society, a Church, which is the teacher of His truth to men, a society with which He will always dwell, as its guide and protector, a society which will be ever favored by the presence of the Holy Ghost. The Church of Christ is "the pillar and ground of the truth"; it is founded on a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; Jesus Himself will be with it "all days, even to the consummation of the world"; and He has promised that "the paraclete, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatever I have said to you." Such a Church, guided by God, cannot teach aught but the truths of God.

Here, then, we have a society founded by one who cannot deceive nor be deceived. Why was it founded? That it might take His place on earth, as the teacher of His faith to men. How could it take His place and teach His faith if it could err? He is infallible, and His Church, with which He abides forever, must also be necessarily infallible. "As the Father hath sent me, so I also send you" (John xx. 21). "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke x. 16). The Spirit of God is with that Church forever. How, then, can it fall into error?

Let us suppose that the Church is not infallible, that it could teach things that are not true. What would be the consequence? We know, first of all, that our Lord promises eternal life to those who hear and obey the Church's pastors, and threatens eternal loss to those who hear them not. "He that believeth and is baptized,

shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). What would happen if the Church could err in her teaching? She might proclaim some false doctrine, and he who believed it would be saved, while a more enlightened man, who saw that it was false, would be condemned because he refused to assent to falsehood. The one who followed an erring guide would be led to eternal life, while the one who refused to follow would be condemned for avoiding error.

The Church founded by Christ must be as infallible as Christ Himself when she is teaching His faith to men. She was sent by Him to be a guide for the fallen race which He came to save. Through her our blessed Saviour wished His doctrine to be presented to the world pure and undefiled, in all ages; that doctrine was to be free from error as long as it should be needed, that is, until the end of time. His universal Church, then, is incapable of error in its belief; the "body of pastors" must always teach infallibly the truths of God; and, most of all, the visible head of that Church, the successor of Peter as vice-gerent of Christ, is and must always be free from error or danger of error when he "feeds the lambs and the sheep."

"Not of This Fold." If we consider the present state of "our separated brethren," the non-Catholic Churches, what do we see? A maze of contradictions; countless varieties of belief and unbelief; vagueness in doctrine, and a constant tendency to drift further and further away from any concrete form of dogma. Each sect, when it has any definite system of belief, differs in some points of doctrine from all of the others; it is evident that all cannot be teaching the one and unchangeable faith of Christ. If one be right, the others are necessarily wrong. Each of them claims to be the true Church of Christ, or at least a part of it; but they have only two bonds of union: a vague recognition of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," and a bitter and unreasoning spirit of hostility to the Church of Rome.

Even within each sect there is seldom any uniformity of doctrine. Read the works of Anglican or Episcopalian divines, concerning such an essential dogma as the Holy Eucharist. The

usual statement in these books is that that sacrament is merely a symbol of Christ, but that He is not present therein; but a well-known manual of Episcopalian doctrine (bearing the rather misleading title *Catholic Belief*) teaches the dogma of the real presence of our Lord, very much as we Catholics profess it. Can both be right? And as for the Church which permits her teachers to hold and proclaim two doctrines which directly contradict each other, is she a safe guide in the quest for the one and unchanging truth of God?

More than that, in the Protestant Episcopal Church here in America, what recent developments have occurred? Clergymen are controverting and denying the very foundations of Christianity, the virgin birth of Christ, His resurrection, His divinity, the fall of man, the inspiration of the Scriptures; and they remain members and teachers of that Church. There is no central or supreme authority to determine and define the truths of faith, nor to expel those who deny them.

In short, the part of the Christian world which is non-Catholic is turning away from Christianity. It is becoming not merely anti-Christian but entirely irreligious. In America and in England there is a large proportion of the population which still claims to be "Protestant," but it is almost completely alienated from any and all forms of Protestantism. It does not "go to church."

More than fifty millions of the American people are not practising members of any Church. Other millions take their religious obligations very lightly. Far less than half of the fifty-three millions of the children and youth of our country are enrolled in classes where religion is taught, and the membership of Protestant Sunday-schools has fallen off two-thirds within the last eight years.

This is deplorable. From our Catholic standpoint, a religion that imparts much truth with some error is far preferable to no religion whatever. We Catholics hold that each of the Protestant sects is largely teaching truth and partly teaching error; but we believe that the practising Christian who errs on some points of doctrine is a far better servant of God and has a far better chance

of eternal salvation than the so-called "Protestant" who is not a practising Christian at all.

A Disintegrating Religion. There are many things which have contributed to this decadence of Protestantism. One is the multiplying of sects. From the days of Luther, the history of the "reformed" Churches has been an uninterrupted process of disintegration, with a twofold result: first, the mind that is seeking the truth is bewildered by a maze of contradictions and conflicting assertions; secondly, the lack of doctrinal unity has made it impossible to teach religion in our common schools. A plenty of worldly knowledge is imparted to the child, as if worldly success were man's only aim and end; but there is a dearth of religious and moral training, as if religion and morality were of little consequence.

From this first cause a second follows necessarily. Worldly success assumes undue importance. Men forget the Scriptural counsel: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Engrossed in sordid strivings, they think seldom or never of higher and holier things. Was man placed here in this world merely to buy and sell, to gather and hoard? No, his destiny is far higher than this. His earthly life was meant for something more precious than the heaping up of worldly riches. These are not man's end. They may be, indeed, a means to that end, but they are, far more often, a mighty obstacle to its attainment.

The Futility of "Private Judgment." All this deplorable state of things is the result of the basic principle of Protestantism—the alleged "right of private judgment" in matters of faith. When there is no principle of authority in a religious body, it will ultimately cease to be a religious body at all. The Protestant idea of a mighty Christian host, each member thinking and believing and acting as his judgment dictates, but all "keeping step," has proved to be absolutely impracticable. It has had four hundred years in which to show that it could work—and it has not worked. There are too many sects. A religious denomination which, to

its followers, is only one type of faith among many, as good as any other but not better, is not likely to exert any great influence upon those who profess it, or to win adherents among those who do not. When a man is invited to hearken to various voices sounding from different quarters and saying different things, he is likely to give but little heed to any of them. Let us look at the matter of sectarianism as we look at anything else. If Methodism, for example, be right in all points, Episcopalianism *must* be wrong in some points. If the Baptist faith be true and perfect, the Lutheran *must* be partly in error. If I proclaim the necessity of infant baptism and you deny it, can we both be right? As well might we say that we should both be right if I teach that twice five equals ten and you maintain that it equals twenty.

What, then, is the essential difference between the uncertain thing called Protestantism and the certain thing called Catholicism? The one has no principle of authority whatever, for "private judgment" has amply demonstrated its futility. The other possesses an *infallible* principle. It cannot err when it teaches the truths of God. It was founded by Jesus Christ as a visible teaching body, and is preserved from error by the Holy Spirit of God. Its power and its effectiveness do not depend on its admirable organization, nor on the beauty and artistic richness of its ritual, but on its faith in a divine revelation, one and unchangeable, of which it is the unerring teacher. Its organization is not of divine origin, excepting the Papacy and the Episcopacy; all the other details of hierarchy and of discipline are man-made. Its ritual is the gradual growth of centuries, and its ceremonial grandeur is intended to be an aid to devotion, and to help in teaching the Church's doctrines. If our Catholic Church were to abolish all her ceremonies to-morrow she would still be the same Church, the same infallible teacher of the truths of God.

Well may we, who are of the flock of Christ, thank Him because He has made for us a sheepfold and has given us a shepherd. We have no uncertainty as to what God has revealed to men. We are not "carried about with every wind of doctrine." We know

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that our Church is the teacher of the revelation that comes from God, and that it is preserved from error in belief or teaching because He founded it to give to all men not doubt but certainty concerning the truths that bring salvation.

Chapter XVI

THE TRUE CHURCH

IN the summary of our faith which is known as the Apostles' Creed we profess that we believe in "the Holy Catholic Church." The true sense of these words is the hinge on which all our controversy with Protestants turns. Many of their churches use the Creed, and thereby express a belief in a Church which is Holy and Catholic; then they attempt to explain away the obvious meaning of the phrase.

In a footnote usually appended to the text of the Apostles' Creed in Protestant books of doctrine and devotion we learn that "by these words (the Holy Catholic Church) is meant the Church of God in general"; that is, some nebulous sort of organization which has no unity in faith, for its branches teach widely differing and contradictory doctrines; and no unity in government, for the almost innumerable sects of Protestantism possess no common centre of authority, because each is the result of a revolt against authority, a separation either from the ancient Roman Church or from some earlier form of Protestantism. In the very first years of that great rebellion the work of disintegration began; and non-Catholic Christianity to-day has become a maze of contradictory sects, some large, some small, of which none has a central government possessing worldwide authority. There is no visible bond of union among them except that they are all "Protestant"—leagued in hostile protest against one Church which antedated them all, which is to some of them the "scarlet woman" or the anti-christ of the Apocalypse, and which is looked upon by others as a Christian Church indeed, but one which has fallen into degradation, superstition and corruption.

We wish to disclaim, here and throughout this book, any intention of offending sincere non-Catholic Christians, but at this juncture we intend to consider Protestantism from a doctrinal standpoint. It has no unity of doctrine whatever. It is probably the weakest heresy that ever existed. There were many earlier revolts against the Church of Rome that had fairly well-defined and plausible systems of doctrine, such as they were; but Protestantism has no uniform doctrinal plan to-day, and has never had one.

None of its sects claims infallibility. Protestantism leaves the final decision on any point to the private judgment of the individual. He may decide in one way, and his neighbor may settle it in another, and each may think that his view is the right one; but, manifestly, both *cannot* be right. What kind of Church is it that cannot decide which is right and which is wrong? Can a Church teach the truth when she does not know what the truth is?

The theory that private judgment is the sole rule of faith has led to the present-day confusion of Protestantism and to the myriad sects that we see in the Christian world in this enlightened twentieth century. Instead of being a principle of faith, it is a principle of confusion and error. The early reformers taught that in the Scriptures man may find all the truths necessary for salvation, and that everyone can ascertain these truths for himself by the reading of the Bible. What of the man who cannot read? What of the many centuries when there were no printed books? What of the decision of the ignorant man, as compared with that of the scholar? Is it likely that they will agree? And if one man decides, for instance, that Christ was truly God and another decides that He was not, can both be right?

Lacking the Means of Grace. This "Church of God in general" cannot claim that it is equipped to bring sanctification through grace to men in an effective manner. While it may attempt to teach the doctrines of Christ and to make men holy, its various parts or sects have deprived themselves in large measure of the most effective means of grace, the sacraments. Protestant

ritual consists of prayer and praise, but it has abandoned the most essential feature of worship, which is sacrifice.

No Catholicity. Catholicity means universality. Do we find it in "the Church in general," of which Protestants speak? No; its sects are mostly national or local in their character and extent, the "Church of England," for example, being officially restricted to the British Empire, and having as its head the King. What would happen to that Church, by the way, if England became a republic? Who would then be its head? Possibly a Jew or an agnostic. In our own country we have "the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States," with no head whatever, and innumerable other sects with a similar lack of organization or central government. No Protestant body claims universal dominion over the souls of all men throughout the world. Not one of them dares to say: "I am the true and only Church of Christ; outside my pale there is no salvation; all men must hearken to my voice and submit to my law." It is clear, then, that none of these sects separately nor all of them collectively can claim to be the Catholic Church, the "one fold with one shepherd," which was commissioned to teach God's truth to all nations.

No Apostolicity. What is the other mark of the true Church of Christ? It must "date back" to Christ. It must have a continuous history, going back from our twentieth century to the days of our blessed Saviour. And the oldest form of Protestantism came into existence in 1517. The other sects are of more recent origin. If God had intended one of these, or all of these, to be the teacher of His faith to mankind, it follows as a necessary consequence that for fifteen hundred years after the time of Christ there was no teacher; that mankind was misled by a spurious Church; that during all these centuries there was no visible body on earth that could guide men in the path of salvation. Let us suppose that all this is true, and that the real light of the Gospel was finally brought to men in the sixteenth century. Who were the messengers who brought it? Were they saints of God, worthy successors of the Apostles of Christ? Far otherwise; the chief

founders of early Protestantism were a renegade monk in Germany and an adulterous king in England.

The "Branch Theory." Certain Anglican divines, perhaps seventy years ago, invented an ingenious theory to give to their Church at least the appearance of catholicity and apostolicity. They asserted that the Church of Christ has three great branches; namely, the Church of England, the Greek Church and the Roman Church; that each of these has apostolical succession, that each has its own sacraments, and that each is the Church of Christ.

Unfortunately for the Anglican position, the "branch theory" does not work. Let us see whither it leads us. The Greek will have his own Church, teaching him that there are seven sacraments, and that in the Holy Eucharist we receive the body and blood of Christ, but denying the supremacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff. The Englishman will have a Church (also supposed to be the true Church of Christ) which has two sacraments only, which looks upon the real presence as "a damnable idolatry" and "a blasphemous fable," but which agrees with the Greek Church in rejecting the claims of the Papacy. The members of the Roman Church will differ from the Greek in a few things and from the Englishman in many things. Each of these is to be the true Church for its own members: the Church of England for the inhabitants of that country, the Greek Church for Greeks and the Slavonic nations, and the Roman Church chiefly for the Latin races.

What will be the Church of the man who is neither a Briton nor a Greek nor a Slav nor a Latin? And why should the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith be taught in different and wholly contradictory forms in various parts of the world? Why should a national boundary-line alter the truth? That line may be shifted or effaced by the next war, as many lines were in the recent European conflict. If the Greek is right in his belief in the real presence, the Anglican is evidently wrong in denying it. If the Roman is correct in his claim that the Pope is supreme and infallible, the Greek and the Anglican must be in error. And why should a man believe one thing because he was born in Eng-

land, and another man believe something exactly opposite because he was born in Italy? It is needless to carry the discussion further.

The Schismatic Churches. Of these there are several, mostly in Eastern countries. The largest of them is the Greek Church, called "orthodox," which really consists of about fifteen distinct Churches, four of which are under the schismatic patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, and eleven others in Russia, Greece, Roumania and other countries. All of these are separated from the Roman Church. Their revolt began in the year 867, under Photius, patriarch of Constantinople. The schism was healed later, for a time, but was revived in 1054, and still continues.

These schismatic Churches are one in faith with us on almost all points, rejecting only a few—namely, the "procession of the Holy Ghost" from the Father and the Son, the Immaculate Conception, and the primacy and infallibility of the Pope.

None of them, nor all of them together, can be the true Church of Christ. They do not claim infallibility. They are apostolical in orders, without doubt, and nearly all of the "deposit of faith" has been preserved by them; but they have severed their connection with the central authority of the Church, the rock upon which that Church was built. They are not catholic, being restricted to a small part of the world. Nor can they claim the mark of holiness in its entirety, although it is undeniable that, having orders and real sacraments, they have access to the means of grace instituted by our Blessed Lord. But since their severance of the bond which united them to the living Church of Christ they have lapsed into a state of spiritual stagnation.

Thus we see that in the schismatic Churches the marks of the true Church do not all exist. They possess a great part of the Catholic faith, but they have no unity of government. They have the quality of holiness, but only in a limited degree. They are not catholic. They are apostolical in orders, but have cut themselves off from the centre of unity, the vicar of Christ, the principal and infallible teaching authority of Christ's Church.

From Man, Not from God. All the "separated Churches," whether heretical or schismatic, are of human origin. No Protestant body can by any possibility have received its mission from the Apostles. No schismatic Church, as such, can trace its history back to the chosen twelve. At some time or other each began an independent life by separating itself from the already existing Church or from some other body that had already left that Church. Each revolted because it rejected that Church's authority, or because it refused to accept certain doctrines which that Church had been teaching from the beginning. It is clear, then, than none of these bodies can now be teaching a faith that comes down in unbroken succession from the days of the Apostles.

The Anglican Church declares that under the sway of Rome "Christianity was grossly corrupted," and that at the time of the so-called Reformation the English Church "came back to the simplicity of Apostolic doctrine." That "corrupt Church of Rome" had been the only teacher of the faith of Christ for fifteen hundred years. Was it a failure, a false and erring guide, teaching untruth to all mankind? What, then, was the value of the promises of our Blessed Lord, that "the gates of hell should not prevail against it," that He would "be with it all days," and that the Spirit of truth would "abide with it forever"?

The Marks of the True Church. Any Church which claims to be the true Church of Christ, the kingdom of God on earth, the divinely commissioned teacher of His faith to men, must have certain marks or qualities. In the words of the Council of Constantinople, it must be "One, and Holy, and Catholic, and Apostolic."

A Church which teaches doctrines that vary from age to age cannot be the custodian of the one and unchanging faith of Christ. A multitude of sects, each differing from the others in doctrine, cannot be the true dispensers of the truths of God. A number of guides who lead in different directions lead nowhere.

A Church That is One. Is there such a Church? She stands visible to all the world. She has the centre of her authority in the imperial city where Peter established his See. She is one

because all her members, dwelling in every part of the earth, are united under one visible head, the Bishop of Rome, who sits in the chair of Peter. He is her centre of unity. He has received supreme power to teach and govern the Church of God. Others, the bishops of the Church, share that work in subordination to him, teaching one faith throughout the world.

The unity of our faith hardly needs discussion. All Catholics hold and profess the same belief. The faith of an American Catholic is precisely the same as that of a European or an Asiatic. We hold that our Church is an infallible teacher; we know that we are bound to hear her voice; and when her head, the Sovereign Pontiff, defines a doctrine as of faith, or when her united pastors teach a truth throughout the world, for us Catholics controversy is at an end.

Our Catholic Church has also unity of worship, which follows necessarily from her unity of faith. What is her supreme act of worship? The unbloody sacrifice, the Holy Mass, through which Jesus Christ Himself is ever present on our altars. It is offered daily by almost every Catholic priest throughout the world. What are the means of grace by which our Church sanctifies mankind? The sacraments, through which the grace and merits of our Saviour are dispensed to those whom He died to save. And everywhere she administers them with the same essential rites.

The Church That is Holy. The Catholic Church possesses, far in excess of any other, the mark or quality of holiness. She teaches a doctrine that is all holy, because, being infallible, she must necessarily impart to her children the true and holy faith of Christ. She does not tell us, as did the early reformers, that man can be saved by faith alone, without good works, that he has not free will, that you or I may be predestined to eternal fire without any fault of ours. She makes her children holy by administering to them the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ, and by continually teaching them the moral law. It is part of her system to bless and encourage all who strive to attain to the Christian ideals of charity, humility and purity. We see in her fold those great religious societies of men and women who voluntarily bind

themselves to poverty, chastity and obedience, who give up all things for Christ; who devote their lives to works of charity, such as the education of youth, the care of the poor and the aged, the support of orphans, the nursing of the sick, and the rescue of the fallen. Some, with another kind of religious vocation, follow the contemplative life, spending their days in prayer and penance.

Let me show you an extract which deserves insertion here because of its unexpected fairness. It is taken from a Masonic publication, the *Bulletin* of the Los Angeles Consistory of the Scottish Rite, and is a remarkable tribute to the Catholic Church and a candid recognition of the great service which she has rendered to the world. It reads as follows:

"In certain circles it is popular to denounce bitterly the Roman Catholic Church, and in the condemnation forget her splendid achievements and the consecrated service she has rendered to humanity. The long roll of patriots, heroes and saintly souls who have drawn their spiritual inspiration from her communion is sufficient proof of the real greatness of her religious teachings. Among her priests are those whose names have become synonymous with purity of life and unselfish effort for the betterment of humanity—Father Damien, Father Mathew, Father Junipero Serra, St. Francis of Assisi, Savonarola. Her countless institutions of learning, her manifold charities, the universality of her spiritual appeal, must awaken the admiration of all men. It must not be forgotten that at her altars the common people received their first training in democracy. Prince and pauper, peasant and merchant, knelt together, equal before God. Tolerance knows that there are two sides to every question, and that a picture which shows only shadows is essentially false."

Ah! would that such tolerance and fair-mindedness were the rule, and not the exception! Would that others were not so blinded by prejudice that they cannot see the glory and holiness of the Church which traces her history back through nineteen centuries, which has labored in every land for the spiritual and worldly welfare of mankind, and which has always striven to

imitate the holiness and charity of Him who gave her to men as their unerring guide on the road to heaven!

Our Church is holy because her founder is holy—none other than the incarnate Son of God. Zealous Apostles were her first leaders; millions of holy martyrs shed their blood for her; illustrious saints have adorned every age of her history. She sets these before us as our models. She demands of her priests and religious a high degree of perfection. Day by day the priest must pray for his people, the public prayer of the Church, which we call the Divine Office. He has the power and the duty of offering daily the adorable sacrifice of the living body and blood of Christ. He is "the dispenser of the mysteries of God"; and he is urged to be worthy of that sublime vocation. Do we say, then, that all priests are holy men? Would that they were! We have had bad priests, here and there; we have had wicked popes, now and then. But the Catholic Church has been a holy Church and a teacher of holiness for nineteen centuries.

The Church That is Catholic. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations." Such was the command laid upon the Church by her founder. What Church is doing that work and fulfilling that command? Only one, the Church that is saving souls in every land; the Church whose activities are so widespread that even her adversaries give her the title of "Catholic," which is "universal."

Wherever it is possible, she has her bishops and her churches. In infidel lands her missionaries are laboring to-day as did Patrick and Augustine and Columbanus when Europe was pagan. She was sent to teach all nations, and she does so. She claims universal jurisdiction, and she exercises it. In every country of our globe she has established her government, and in well-nigh every village and hamlet she has her place of worship bearing aloft the cross of Christ. In the populous cities of civilized lands rise the spires of mighty temples, and in town and country you may hear the sweet sound of her Angelus-bell. Beyond the Arctic Circle, in the tropics of Africa, in the remote islands of distant seas, everywhere her priests and nuns are waging war against the powers of

evil, striving to bring light to those that sit in darkness. Alaska, Sumatra, Uganda, all are equally her harvest-fields. The faith which is preached in Pekin and Timbuktu is precisely the same as that of New York or London.

Nor does she waive her claim to be considered Catholic when she speaks of herself as Roman. Rome is her centre; her circumference is the world. She uses that title because all her members, even in the remotest parts of the earth, are in accord and communion with the Roman See, the chair of Peter, the centre of their Church's government and faith and worship.

The Church That is Apostolic. Apostolic—what does that mean? Two things. First, that the powers which her clergy receive in ordination come by unbroken succession from the Apostles. Second, that the faith which she teaches is the faith of the Apostles, unchanged through the centuries. A Church may be apostolic in her orders and not in her faith, as we have seen in discussing the schismatic sects of the Orient.

Is there a Church which is apostolic in both senses? Yes, and one Church only. It is the Roman Catholic Church, which was founded on the rock of Peter. Her pontiffs have reigned in Rome for nineteen hundred years; from Peter to Pius XI they number two hundred and sixty-one. Her bishops derive their authority from the Apostles, through an unbroken line of succession. She is apostolic in her faith, for her teaching to-day is the same "deposit of faith" which the Apostles received from their Master, without addition or alteration.

Thus we see that there is one Church and one only which has the four marks of truth. The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is the Church of Rome, founded by our Lord Jesus Christ on Peter, the rock. Wonderful indeed has been her work and her history! She has always had *unity,* for in all her centuries she has taught one doctrine, under one government, and with one system of worship. She has been ever an exemplar and a messenger of *holiness,* providing man with the means of grace and salvation. She alone possesses *catholicity,* preaching God's word to every race. And, above all, she can claim *apostolicity;* she can trace her

history and her ministry and her doctrine back to the twelve who received their power and their creed from our blessed Saviour. For nineteen hundred years she has "fed the lambs and the sheep." She is the true Church of Christ, and *outside her fold there is no salvation.*

Non-Catholic readers will be, naturally, startled and possibly offended by the claim set forth in those italicized words. Even Catholics may think that they need explanation, and they do. That there may be a clear understanding of their true meaning, read the next chapter.

Chapter XVII

"OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, NO SALVATION"

EXTRA Ecclesiam nulla salus. This means: "Outside the Church there is no salvation."

There are certain declarations frequently made by non-Catholics that seem to be broad and tolerant and full of Christian charity, to the effect that "all religions are good," that "one may be saved in one sect as well as in another," that "different religions are merely different roads to heaven," and that a man may be a Catholic, an Episcopalian, a Methodist, or of any other denomination, and may work out his salvation with equal ease in any of them.

Are these statements really broad, and tolerant, and full of Christian charity? They are broad enough, so broad that they wander from the narrow path of truth. They manifest a seeming tolerance which is really illogical laxity. They have an air of Christian charity; but can we dignify by that name any declarations which lure men away from the one true faith of Christ, which lull them into a false security, and which are directly opposed to Christ's teaching? That is not charity; it is a pretense only, a futile excuse for persistence in error.

The Claim of the Church. What does our Catholic Church declare on this all-important matter? "Unless one faithfully and firmly believes the Catholic faith, he cannot be saved." Such is the teaching, clear and concise, of the summary of faith which is called the Athanasian Creed. "Outside the Church there is no salvation." This has been the position and claim of our Church through all the ages of her history. And of all her claims there is none which gives such offence to non-Catholics. They look

upon it as an arrogant and unwarranted assumption, harsh, and cruel, and bigoted.

Before we argue, let us see what these declarations mean. Do we Catholics hold that only those who profess our faith will be saved, and that all others will be lost? Do we believe that all our Protestant neighbors will be necessarily doomed to eternal fire? By no means, as we shall explain further on. When our Church makes these statements, she is not restricting salvation to those who are in outward communion with her. She is not consigning to unending torment all who are not of her visible fold. She tells us nothing but what our Blessed Lord told concerning salvation. His teaching was never harsh or cruel or bigoted. It was full of truth and love, and so is the teaching of His Church.

The Words of Christ. Why does our Church declare that "outside of her there is no salvation"? Simply and solely because our Lord declared it. She is the teacher of His truth. She has no authority apart from Him. She is merely the witness of the teachings of Christ, explaining His words, unfolding their meaning more and more clearly to mankind through the centuries. She cannot modify or relax His laws, nor alter in any way the faith received from Him. And when she says that there is no salvation except through herself, she merely repeats and emphasizes the teaching of Christ Himself.

When our Lord sent forth His Apostles to carry His faith to all men, what did He say? "Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel." He did not tell them to preach as they pleased, to construct a Gospel for themselves, to teach ideas and inventions of their own. He commanded them to proclaim the Gospel which He had taught them, and none other, "teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you.*" What obligation did this command put upon mankind in regard to the acceptance of this Gospel? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). Even more forcible than our Catholic version is the wording of the Protestant Bible: "He that believeth not shall be damned."

What do these words mean, "believeth" and "believeth not"? Evidently, he who "believeth" accepts the doctrine of Christ as taught by the Apostles and their successors, because it rests on divine authority and is, therefore, true. He who "believeth not" rejects that doctrine, and substitutes other authority for that of God. You and I, dear reader, are put under a strict obligation to accept Christ's teaching. We are not told or permitted to construct a creed according to our own ideas. We are not directed to use our fallible and blundering human judgment to make a religion for ourselves. We are commanded to hearken to the voice of the Apostles, to accept the truths which were taught by the twelve to whom this commission was given, to embrace the faith which they received from Jesus Christ, and which is guarded and defined and taught infallibly by the Church of which they were the earliest leaders. When the Catholic Church of to-day tells us that outside her pale there is no salvation, she says precisely what our Lord said to His Apostles: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." She is simply repeating in even less emphatic language the teaching of her divine founder.

The Penalty of Denial. Let us look further in the Gospels. St. Matthew tells us of the sending of the Apostles to preach the Gospel. Their Master did not say that the acceptance of that Gospel was optional, that we might hearken to that preaching if we chose, or reject it if we so preferred. "Whosoever shall not receive you or hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet" (Matt. x. 14). And then, what would happen? Would the people of that house or city be free to exercise their private judgment as to what they would or would not believe? Could each form a religion of his own, interpreting the Gospel of Christ as he saw fit? Read the next verse: "Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." Sodom and Gomorrah were dens of iniquity; fire from heaven destroyed them because of their carnal wickedness. And our Saviour, the

just God, assures us that a heavier penalty will fall upon the wilful unbeliever.

The Witness of the Truth. Our blessed Redeemer taught no falsehood, no error. He could not deceive; He could not be deceived. "For this am I come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth" (John xviii. 37). His Church, through the Apostles, received this truth from Him, the "deposit of faith"; and any other system of doctrine must necessarily be false, in so far as it differs from the God-given faith which she teaches.

Truth is one. There is no possibility that there can be two true Churches teaching contradictory doctrines. If one be true, the other is obviously not true. Take an example: The multiplication table teaches truth. In our early childhood we learned from it that two and two equal four. We know that that is true. Suppose that another table should be constructed to show that two and two equal five. Would both tables be true?

Now what holds good in that case holds good also and equally in matters of faith. If our Church has a system of doctrine which is true, another Church which proposes a contrary doctrine cannot be teaching the truth, and consequently cannot be a true Church. We cannot imagine two true but contradictory Churches, and far less can we imagine a score or a hundred. All but one must be propounding false doctrines; all but one must be erring guides.

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism"—these are God's words, given through His inspired Apostle, St. Paul. There is one Lord, one God, and not more than one. And so there is one faith only, and one Baptism. We can no more admit two true religions than we can admit two true Gods.

Is this "bigotry"? Is this "narrowness"? Our Church does not and cannot acknowledge any other body as the true Church of Christ. If any Church departs from the truth in a doctrinal matter, even in the smallest degree, it is not teaching the truth in that matter. And he who deliberately rejects the message of truth that comes from God through His Church is guilty of sin,

and deserves condemnation. "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

The "Body" and the "Soul." Does our Church teach, then, that every soul that is not in visible communion with her will lose eternal salvation? She does not. Here is her doctrine: *No one will be lost except through his own fault.* If a man be outside the visible pale of the Church, but not through neglect or malice, he will not be condemned for that reason. If he loses his soul, it will be for other things.

A non-Catholic may, through no personal fault, fail to recognize the Catholic Church as the true Church of God. As a result of early education and inherited prejudices, he may conscientiously think that she is a false and erring teacher. In this belief he may be perfectly sincere. He may be a Protestant, or a Jew, or a pagan; but if he lives up to the modicum of faith which his religion teaches, and if he is so honest and well-disposed that if he knew the Catholic Church to be the infallible Church of God he would enter its fold, he is really a member of it, not visibly, but invisibly and unknowingly. He is of the "soul" of the Church, though not of its "body."

Read the words of Pope Pius IX: "Those who are in invincible ignorance of our most holy religion, and who, carefully observing the natural law and its precepts, actually lead a good and upright life, can, with the help of divine light and grace, attain life eternal." Is this bigotry, or narrowness, or intolerance?

The Sin of Unbelief. Resisting the truth may not be a sin at all, but resisting the *known* truth, in matters of faith, is a grievous crime. What is required that an act be a crime? Three things: on the part of the intellect, sufficient knowledge; with regard to the will, free and full consent; and as for the act itself, it must be a grievous violation of God's law.

Apply this to the case of the sincere Protestant who does not recognize our Church as the true Church, and consequently refuses to adhere to it. The act of refusal, of itself, is clearly a violation of God's law, but in that man's intellect there is not

sufficient knowledge, and in his will there is no consent to a sinful act, simply because he does not know that the act is sinful.

Protestantism has been engaged in a campaign of misrepresentation for four hundred years, and with what result? Our literature and our history are filled with false charges and innuendoes against our Church. From earliest childhood, many Protestants are taught that the "Romish" Church is a vile deceiver, a sink of iniquity, idolatrous, superstitious, hypocritical; that its members are the slaves of a despotic Pontiff who permits neither religious liberty nor political independence; that its clergy are mostly ignorant, sunk in wickedness, plotting always to exterminate all who differ from them in belief and refuse to submit to their sway. Even the better informed are so misled by scientific fallacies that they look upon the Church as benighted and backward, having no claims that an enlightened man need consider.

And these men may be perfectly sincere. Look over the list of notable converts to the Catholic faith: Newman, Manning, Fenwick, Brownson, Hecker and a host of others, clergy and lay, in England and in our own land, men of lofty intellect, of high ideals, of splendid moral integrity. It took years, in some cases half their lives, to dissipate the prejudices arising from early training and surroundings. Are there not many others like them, but of less ability and with scantier opportunities of finding the truth? Millions, undoubtedly. And many of these may be saved, through the mercy and grace of God, on account of their good faith.

Separated as they are from Catholic unity, many Protestants retain and profess a considerable part of the real Catholic faith. They trust in the merits of Christ. They use at least one of the main channels of grace, that is, prayer. They believe in God, in the incarnation and the redemption, in the necessity of sorrow for sin, in the justice and mercy of God, in judgment, and heaven, and hell.

Whence do they get these doctrines? From the Catholic Church. These were her teachings for fifteen hundred years before there was a Protestant in the world. They are Catholic dogmas; and a firm faith in them may be the means of grace

and eternal salvation for many who are not of the visible fold of the Church.

Possible, but Difficult. But salvation will be far more difficult for them than for Catholics. Why? Because they have fewer means of grace. They have only one effective sacrament; namely, Baptism; for they mostly deny the very nature of the Eucharist, and reject all the other sacraments. They know nothing of the solace of confession; they never experience the interior peace that comes to the soul through Holy Communion. They have no priesthood and no Mass; they have no rosary, no indulgenced prayers, nor any of the other manifold means of grace and sanctification which our Church proffers so bountifully to her children. Nevertheless, they have kept a few things which are Catholic; and by the using of these the non-Catholic who is in good faith may, through God's loving mercy, attain eternal salvation, because he is unknowingly a Catholic, because he is "of the soul" of the Church even though he is not outwardly united to it. The true Church of God here on earth has many members of whom we know nothing. And if we ourselves reach heaven, we may find there, in "the great multitude that no man can number," some whom we knew as Protestants in this life, some who professed the ancient creed of Judaism. We may stand before God's throne with some who lived and died in the darkness of paganism, but who were sincere and devout, and whose fidelity to the things of faith that they knew and to the graces that they received has made them saints of God.

Chapter XVIII

VIRTUES

A VIRTUE is well and briefly defined as "a habit of right conduct." A merely natural virtue, like any other habit, may be acquired by the repetition of acts, as we all know from our daily experience, in regard to both virtues and vices. We acquire facility in thoughts and words and actions, be they good or evil, by doing them repeatedly. But a supernatural virtue must be a gift of God, infused into our souls by Him, as the theologians say.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, there are three classes of virtues, intellectual, moral and theological. Of the first class, the intellectual virtues, which are wisdom, science, etc., we need not treat here. The moral ones are usually called "cardinal virtues," on account of their importance; they are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Under some of these four headings we may list any of the moral virtues required of us by the law of God. For example, the virtue of religion comes under justice, because through it we give God His due; chastity under temperance, because it implies restraint. But it is especially the third class of virtues that we wish to discuss and explain here, the "theological virtues," which are faith, hope and charity.

Our Three Duties. "What must I do to save my soul?" This question is found on the first page of the Catechism; and it is a question which every thinking man must ask. All who have come to the use of reason (if they make use of it) know that there is a supreme Being whom we call God, eternal, immutable, all-powerful, all-wise; that there is a distinction between good and evil, one being conformity with the will of God, and the other an act or state of rebellion against that will; that our

human soul is immortal, destined to a future life that will never end; and that during the eternity which lies before us we shall be rewarded or punished according to our deserving. Well, then, may we ask ourselves: "What must I do to save my soul?" for on the answer and on the manner in which we put it into effect depends our eternal weal or woe.

The Catechism gives us the answer. "We must worship God by faith, hope, and charity; that is, we must believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him with all our heart."

These are the theological virtues, faith, hope and charity. They are pure gifts of God. By faith we acknowledge that God is truth itself; we subject our reason to Him because we know that it is weak and fallible, while He is incapable of error or of deceit. By hope we recognize that He is all-powerful and all-merciful, the giver of all good, ever faithful to His promises. And by charity we love Him, and conform our lives and actions to His holy will.

The virtue of faith consists in a firm belief in the truths which God reveals to mankind, truths which are often beyond the scope of man's intellect, but which rest on the authority of God. The virtue of hope tells us of the means of grace, and of the helps which God's goodness has provided for sanctity and salvation. And, just as the virtue of faith teaches us what we are to believe, so the virtue of charity tells us what we are to do in God's service, that we may thereby show our love for Him and keep ourselves pleasing to Him and worthy of His love.

The principal object of our faith is God; the direct object of hope is the eternal possession of God in heaven; and the object of charity is God the lovable one, in whose eternal love we shall find unending happiness.

Faith, hope and charity! Well are they called "theological virtues"; that is, virtues which come from God and lead us to Him. They are given to us by God, our Creator and Redeemer; they bring us to God, our end and everlasting reward. He is the object and the motive of these great and essential virtues. We believe the various truths of faith. Why? Because they come

from God, the eternal truth. We hope to enjoy the vision of God hereafter, to possess Him forever. Why? Because He has promised to assist by His graces all who strive to serve Him, and to reward fidelity with everlasting happiness. We love God above all things. Why? Because He is infinitely perfect, infinitely worthy of our love.

THE VIRTUE OF FAITH

What is faith? It is the virtue by which we believe without doubting whatever God teaches. It is a firm adherence to the doctrine which He has revealed, because the truth of that revelation rests on His testimony.

As we explained in the introduction to this work, our opinions and judgments may be based on various grounds which have different values. Some truths are self-evident. Some are deduced from these, following naturally from them by what we call inference. Some others are known through the testimony of our senses; and, again, there are others which come to us in none of these ways, but which we accept on trustworthy evidence. For example, we know that there is a country called China. How do we know it? The existence of that country is not self-evident, nor do we know it by deduction or inference; neither have we seen it. But we have absolute certainty that there is such a country, because we have testimony of many who have seen it and who are reliable witnesses. By thus accepting human testimony we have what is called human or historical faith.

There are other truths of which we can have knowledge in none of these ways. They are not self-evident, nor can we infer their existence, nor are they knowable through our senses, nor even by human testimony; nevertheless we can have complete certainty concerning them, in a way that is superior to any of these. We know them because they are a part of the divine revelation, because they rest on the truth of God. They are the teachings of divine faith.

Firm and Entire. As God is the highest authority that we can have, our faith in the things revealed by Him must be unwavering,

a firm and enduring faith. We must believe all the truths of His revelation; that is, our faith must be entire. The doubting or denial of any single point of doctrine which He teaches us would mean that we were calling into question His truthfulness, and this would destroy the very foundation on which divine faith rests. And so there must be no doubt, no hesitancy, when we know that this thing or that is God's truth, or the teaching of God's infallible Church.

Is it necessary that you or I must have a distinct knowledge of ecah separate article of faith and give a special and explicit assent to each? No. The opportunities of learning all the details of God's revelation are not available to all. Some men are learned, some are illiterate; but the divine faith of the peasant may be as perfect and complete as that of the scholar. The latter may know and believe each separate article; this we call explicit faith. The former, instructed in a few important points of Catholic faith and practice, accepts all the others, which he may know vaguely or not at all, when he assents to the whole doctrine of God's Church; this is called implicit faith.

From God, through the Church. The Catholic Church is the divinely appointed custodian and interpreter of the revelation which comes from God. She testifies that such and such doctrines have been revealed by Him, and in this she cannot err. But our faith is not really based on her, even though through her we learn the truths which we believe. It rests solely on the authority of God. The Church is a messenger, divinely commissioned, immune from error; she brings to mankind absolute certainty that this doctrine or that has been revealed by God.

The Necessity of Faith. Faith is necessary to salvation. "Without faith. it is impossible to please God," as St. Paul tells us; and our Lord, when He commissioned His Apostles to preach the Gospel declared that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16).

How much faith is necessary? All the truths revealed by God must be believed with implicit faith at least, as we have explained

above. We must assent to all the revelation that God has made, even though we may not know it all in detail; that is, we must be so imbued with faith that we accept without questioning whatever He teaches us, or whatever His Holy Church proposes to us as His doctrine.

Some truths are a necessary condition for salvation; others are not. When we speak of something which is necessary for salvation, we mean that if we are destitute of it, even through no fault of our own, we cannot be saved. For example, faith in the existence of God is necessary in this sense; a man who has the use of reason and who does not believe that there is a God cannot attain heaven. There are other truths which are not absolutely necessary for salvation, but which we are commanded to believe in order to be saved; that is, we must accept them when we have learned them; but if without any fault of ours we never know them, we may be saved without such knowledge.

The Indispensable Things. What articles of faith are absolutely necessary? That is, what things must be accepted with clear and explicit faith by one who has the use of reason, in order that he may be saved? "He that cometh to God," says St. Paul, "must believe that he is, and is a reward to them that seek him" (Heb. xi. 6). Therefore every reasoning man must believe in the existence of God, and in reward and punishment. Theologians hold that, since the coming of the Saviour, man is bound, as a necessary condition of salvation, to believe the mysteries of the Trinity and of the incarnation and death of Christ, provided, of course, that he has had any means of knowing them; for the pagan who has never heard of Christ or of His Church may be possibly saved if he accepts the essentials cited by the Apostles; namely, that God exists and gives reward and punishment.

What else are we commanded to know? What further things must be accepted with explicit faith, even though they are not absolutely necessary to salvation? The substance of the Apostles' Creed, the Commandments of God and of the Church, and the nature and effects of such of the sacraments as we are required to receive. This is the minimum of religious knowledge for the

members of our Catholic Church. Every Catholic who has come to the use of reason is commanded to know and accept these leading points of Catholic doctrine.

Manifesting Our Faith. We are strictly required to make acts of faith, at least internally, at certain times; namely, as soon as we come to the use of reason and learn the simplest truths of revelation; when we receive any sacrament, or perform any other duty which calls for an expression of our faith; in times of temptation, and especially at the hour of death. Moreover, we are bound to make acts of faith frequently during our life, and to omit this would be a grievous sin; but we fulfil this duty adequately as often as we pray, or assist at Mass, or receive any sacrament, or perform any other religious duty with proper dispositions.

We Catholics are also bound to make open profession of our faith, when such profession is called for; in the words of the Catechism, "as often as God's honor, our neighbor's good, or our own requires it." It is never lawful, and is always a grievous sin, to deny one's faith. "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 33). However, our faith may, under certain conditions, be concealed, but not by denial in word or deed. We are not bound to manifest it at all times, to parade it, as it were, before our neighbors. But when a Catholic is questioned by persecutors, or when his silence would injure the Church or encourage her enemies, or when his courageous example would restrain another from denying the faith or committing grievous sin, then he is strictly bound to acknowledge his faith openly, even though it be at the cost of his life. Such was the spirit of the martyrs who shed their blood in every century of our Church's history, who made themselves saints of God through their faith and heroism. "Though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality" (Wis. iii. 4).

We Catholics, then, have strict obligations regarding our faith. It must be firm. It must be entire. We must thank God for it, because it is His gift, leading us to Him and to eternal happiness.

We must bow to His authority and to that of the Church which He has given to us as our guide. We should endeavor to acquire a complete knowledge of God's revealed truth, through His Church's teachings. We should be proud of our Catholic faith, never fearing to show that we possess it, when such manifestation will do honor to God, or redound to our neighbor's good or to our own.

THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

What is hope? The ordinary meaning of the word is "a strong desire of something with the expectation of obtaining it." In merely human affairs, when we desire natural goods, we call it human hope. But the theological virtue which is necessary for our salvation is something far higher than this. It rests on supernatural motives and aims at supernatural ends. As the Catechism defines it, it is "a gift of God by which we hope for eternal life and for the means of obtaining it."

Like faith, hope is truly a gift of God. We cannot get it or use it by our own efforts. It is infused into our souls at Baptism, as an essential requisite for our salvation. It rests upon faith; that is, it presupposes a knowledge of God and of His truth. We cannot hope for what we do not know; but when we do know God, when we have learned of His infinite perfections and His unbounded mercy and love, we are permitted to desire the possession and enjoyment of Him in everlasting happiness, and to trust that He will provide the graces which will lead us to that eternal bliss.

Although hope is God's gift, and although we cannot acquire it by any effort of our own, we can nourish and strengthen it after we have received it; and this is put upon us as an obligation by the first Commandment, which prescribes that God shall be adored, for we are taught that adoration is given "by faith, hope and charity; that is, we must believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him with all our heart."

What Do We Hope For? When we exercise this virtue of hope, its object is God, our supreme good; we desire to possess

Him eternally. He created us "to know Him, and love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven." Hope differs from charity. By this latter virtue, as we shall explain further on, we love God for His own sake; but by hope we seek Him for our own benefit, because He alone can eternally satisfy the longings of our souls. He is the end of our being. Eternal life with Him is our destiny, and the reason for our creation. How beautiful are the words of St. Augustine: "We were made for Thee, O Lord, and our hearts are restless and dissatisfied until they rest in Thee."

Hope, then, is the desire of attaining that happiness, of being for all eternity in possession of that end. It is more than a mere desire. It is an expectation, for God has promised everlasting happiness to us, on condition that we believe in Him, make use of the means of grace which He gives us, and manifest our love by faithful service. Our hope is founded on Him, and on Him alone. He created us for heaven; He redeemed us, that we might be His children forever; and He promises unending bliss and eternal glory to those whom He loves, if they love Him in return.

Since we desire God and everlasting happiness, we must necessarily desire also the means that are essential for the obtaining of grace and salvation. They are prayer and the sacraments, and they are called the secondary objects of hope. The first of these has already been considered briefly in a previous chapter; the explanation of the sacraments, collectively and separately, will be given very thoroughly further on in this book.

May we rightfully hope for natural goods, such as a long life, prosperity and good health, and may the desire of these be a part of the supernatural virtue of hope? Yes and no; it depends on the end in view. Such desires will be lawful, undoubtedly, if we wish for these things in so far as they lead us to God; not otherwise. A long life is not necessarily a useful life; length of days will not make our salvation more assured unless we have used them in working for God. Our real life will come in the next world, and will have no end. Health is a blessing, indeed; but sufferings patiently borne bring merit and reward. Wealth may be a great

means of well-doing, but how often do we find it so? It is more frequently a peril and the cause of eternal loss. Dives is in hell; Lazarus, the beggar, enjoys the happiness of heaven forever. And we all remember the comparison which our Saviour used—the camel and the needle's eye—when He spoke of the rich man's difficulty in entering the kingdom of heaven.

Here, Not Hereafter. Hope is a virtue which we can possess and practise only during our earthly life. It does not exist in heaven. The souls that are saved have no further need of it, for they now possess what they formerly hoped for. They have no longer the desire and expectation of seeing God, for He is theirs forever in the beatific vision. They no longer hope for salvation, for they have attained it.

How is it in hell? The souls of the lost have no hope. It is true that they still ardently desire the happiness which they have lost forever, but they have no expectation of obtaining it. Their eternal and hopeless separation from God is a part of their unending punishment. And even in this life the virtue of hope is not possessed by those who are destitute of faith. Not believing in God, they are necessarily without hope of possessing Him. As St. Paul wrote to the Christian converts of Ephesus: "You were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the conversation of Israel, and strangers to the testament, having no hope of the promise, and without God in this world" (Ephes. ii. 12).

Sins against Hope. As the Catechism teaches, there are two sins against hope, presumption and despair. They are both crimes of such gravity that they are numbered among the "sins against the Holy Ghost."

Presumption is "a rash expectation of salvation without making use of the means necessary to obtain it." It is an unreasonable and unwarranted dependence on God's mercy without considering His justice. The foundation of hope is the goodness and promises of God, which assure us of salvation provided that we use the graces which He presents to us. God promises no reward to those who fail to keep His laws; far otherwise. His justice will

mete out stern and unending punishment to the unrepentant sinner.

The sin of despair is "a loss of hope in God's mercy." That mercy is infinite. No sin is too great that it cannot be forgiven; no weight of guilt can be so heavy that it cannot be taken away if the sinner repents for it and seeks the channels of God's grace. The merits of the sacrifice of Calvary were acquired by none other than the incarnate Son of God; He came to redeem all mankind from all sin; on our part, one thing only is necessary to make that redemption effective: sincere sorrow for our offences, which entails the use of the means of reconciliation and spiritual strength which He has provided for us. These are prayer and the sacraments.

There is a lesser sin against hope, a sin of which you and I, dear reader, may have been often guilty of in some degree. It consists in a loss of confidence in God's providence, a lack of complete reliance on His promises. When afflictions come, when worldly burdens rest heavily upon us, when anxieties and trials are our daily lot, we are sometimes tempted to believe and to say that "God has forgotten us." When we pray, and an answer to our prayer is denied by God's wisdom or deferred by His providence, we may think and say that "our prayers are not heard." And these are sins against hope, although in many cases they have not sufficient malice to be considered grievous faults.

THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY

We come now to the last and the greatest of the theological virtues. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (I Cor. xiii. 2). Faith unites us to God through our understanding; but there is another virtue by which, if we possess and practise it, we are united to Him by our affections and our will. This is charity.

When our blessed Saviour gave us a summary of our duties to God, He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second

is like unto this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37, 39). Thus we see that charity embraces all our duties, and that, therefore, it is necessary for salvation; for salvation depends on the faithful fulfilling of these very duties, both toward God and toward our neighbor.

This, the third of the theological virtues, is "the gift of God by which we love Him above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God." It is truly a gift of God. We cannot acquire it by our own powers, nor can we deserve it in any way. It is bestowed on us by the mercy of God, through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ. "In this is charity," says St. John, "not as though we had loved God, but because he hath loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. . . . Let us therefore love God, because God hath loved us" (1 Epist. iv. 9, 19).

By charity we love God above all things for His own sake. We love Him because He is supremely good, infinitely lovable, true and just and merciful and holy. This is called "the love of benevolence," or friendship. Or we may love Him, as it were, from a sense of gratitude and a desire of further blessings, on account of what He has done or will do for us. The pure virtue of charity is found only in the first, the love of benevolence; but the second, the love which comes from gratitude or desire, though imperfect and insufficient, is not reprehensible; for by acknowledging that all happiness is in God, the soul virtually looks to Him alone as its end and destiny.

"Above All Things." The love of God which we call charity must be sovereign, above all other loves. Our blessed Saviour said: "Thou shalt love God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul." This is a commandment. Under pain of mortal sin we must love Him above all things; we must be ready to sacrifice everything, even our own lives, rather than lose His friendship. Under pain of venial sin, we must love Him so completely that we have no affection for other things except in so far as they lead us to Him.

We lose charity when we sin grievously. Charity means that

we seek God; sin that we turn away from Him. Charity puts God above all things; sin prefers the creature to the Creator. Charity seeks all its happiness in God; sin seeks it in worldly and selfish pleasures. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; and whosoever sinneth hath not seen him nor known him" (1 John iii. 6).

Many theological writers assert that charity and sanctifying grace are really one and the same thing; that the qualities of the one are precisely the qualities of the other. But at any rate it is clear that when we lose God's grace by sin we also lose the holy virtue of charity.

Love of Our Neighbor. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Who is that neighbor whom we must love? When a certain lawyer asked that question, our Saviour's answer was a parable which showed that every man is our neighbor, not only our relatives and friends, not only those of our nation and faith, but even our enemies. Charity requires us to love all men because it requires us to love God. Every man is made in God's likeness; every man shares in His goodness; every man receives His graces. God reveals Himself to His creatures, and if we do not love all His human creatures we do not love Him. "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God love also his brother" (1 John iv. 20, 21).

Here, then, we have the distinguishing mark of the religion of Christ, love of our neighbor, which includes the forgiveness of injuries. It was a teaching that was unknown in the world before our Saviour came. "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you" (John xiii. 34). "You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say to you; Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, and pray for those that persecute and calumniate you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 43-45).

We can manifest our charity towards our neighbor in many

ways, by the "works of mercy," which may be "spiritual" or "corporal." Space will not permit the explaining or even the naming of these, but we should remember that our judgment, our eternal sentence, will depend upon the manner in which we have practised them. On the dread day of final reckoning the Judge will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you. I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink; I was naked, and ye covered me. . . . As long as ye did it to one of these my least brethren, ye did it to me" (Matt. xxv. 31, etc.).

These, then, are the three great virtues which are the foundation of all religion, which comprise our whole duty to God, which are absolutely necessary that we may attain eternal life: faith, by which we know God and believe in Him; hope, by which we desire to be with Him forever; and charity, which is love of God above all things, and love of our neighbor for the sake of God. "And the greatest of these is charity."

Chapter XIX

THE SACRAMENTS

WHEN man had fallen away from his original innocence through the sin of Adam and Eve, God did not cease to love him. His justice demanded punishment, but His mercy was as great as His justice. Unfaithful as we were, He still desired to give us eternal happiness; and that desire caused Him to send a Saviour, His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who became incarnate for us, and suffered and died that we might be restored to our heritage.

Thus were we redeemed, through the death of "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." Thus were we raised from our fallen state, through the atonement of Calvary. The merits of that sacrifice have given to all men a renewed right to heavenly happiness; and these merits, won for us by the immolation of the Son of God, are transmitted to us principally through prayer and the sacraments.

The word *sacrament* has various meanings. In the armies of imperial Rome, it was the military oath of fidelity and obedience. In the Scriptures, it sometimes signifies a secret or holy mystery; but in the language of the Church it means a visible sign or ceremony instituted by Christ, by which grace is given to the souls of men.

Under the Old Law. The question may be asked: If the merits of Christ come to us through the sacraments, how were those saved who lived before His time, and consequently did not and could not receive the sacraments of His Church? We know that during the ages when the world was awaiting His coming there were many saints—patriarchs, prophets and other holy servants of God. They lived virtuous lives; they deserved an eter-

nal reward. It is evident that they must have received great graces from God, but how? We know that they saved their souls, but whence did they get the necessary merit? What channels of grace were provided for them, to take away sin, to impart holiness, and to give salvation?

In the early centuries of our race, before God had made His covenant with Abraham, there was undoubtedly some remedy for original sin, as we have already explained in this work. The stain of Adam's guilt was on all his children, and no salvation was possible unless that stain were removed. Probably the remedy consisted in some act or manifestation of faith in the providence of God and the future redemption of mankind, an act performed by a child's parents after his birth, or by the child himself at the age of reason.

But under the Jewish law, from the time of Abraham until the coming of the Messias, God provided certain rites and ceremonies which much resembled our Christian sacraments, and through which grace was conferred on those who received them. They are known as "sacraments of the Old Law." Authorities differ as to the number of ceremonies which should be included under this title, but we may enumerate the rite of circumcision, the paschal lamb, the ordination of priests and Levites, and various legal purifications.

There are several opinions as to the manner in which these Jewish rites conferred grace. Some held that they gave it of themselves, like our Christian sacraments; but the more general teaching is that they were efficacious only when they were performed as an expression of faith in the coming Redeemer, either on the part of the recipient or of the minister of the rite. With regard to circumcision, many writers have maintained that it was instituted directly as a remedy for original sin, and of itself sufficed to remove it; but the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas is more tenable: that it did not remit original or other sin of itself, but because it was a symbol or type of Christ's Passion; that for an adult, faith in the promised Redeemer was necessary, and, in the case of children, the faith of the parents or of the minister of

the rite. And, unlike Baptism, it did not imprint a character on the soul, nor give a right to the immediate possession of heaven.

The Christian Sacraments. It is the belief of our Catholic Church that there are seven sacraments, seven efficacious signs which, because Christ has so ordained, give grace to the souls of men. These are Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

In Baptism we are "born again," children of God; we are freed from original sin, and our birthright is restored to us. In Confirmation we grow up to the stature of "strong and perfect Christians." By the Holy Eucharist our souls are nourished with the body and blood of Christ. By the sacrament of Penance God cleanses the soul from the leprosy of actual sins committed after Baptism. Extreme Unction removes the last remnant of infirmity and prepares the soul for judgment and eternity. Holy Orders provides rulers and teachers for mankind, that they may receive God's revelation and His sacraments. And Matrimony bestows God's blessing on the natural impulses of humanity, in order that connubial love may be sanctified.

The Number of the Sacraments. Did the Church always teach that there are seven sacraments, and seven only? Strange to say, she did not. For nearly twelve centuries the present enumeration of them was unknown, simply because the exact nature of the sacraments had not been clearly defined. There are many things which the Church uses for the purpose of sanctifying her children, holy practices sanctioned by long usage, and established or adopted by the Church herself, such as holy water, ashes, salt, the ancient ceremony of washing of feet, etc. These are expressive of interior regeneration, but they do not cause it of themselves; they are simply aids to devotion. The theologians of the more recent centuries classify them as sacramentals.

In the earlier ages of the Church the distinction between these and the sacraments was not clearly seen; hence confusion arose as to the numbering of the latter. Up to the fourth century the two sacraments mentioned most definitely in the Gospels were classed together, as being the greatest and most necessary of all.

These were Baptism and the Eucharist. Then Confirmation (in those days usually given immediately after Baptism) was added to the number, being, as it were, a completion of the effect of the first sacrament. Other rites and practices of the Church came into use, and various learned writers, such as Tertullian, St. Cyprian and St. Ambrose, added these to the list of the sacraments. Man-made symbols were confused with the God-given channels of grace. And so it came to pass that, for lack of clearness in defining the true nature of the sacraments, many ceremonies of merely human origin were listed among them for several centuries by very eminent theologians.

Bear in mind, however, that our Church never defined or declared that there are less or more than seven sacraments. She made no definition whatever on the matter until the thirteenth century; then she gave us the doctrine of the seven sacraments as we have it now.

A clear understanding of a sacrament was necessary, and this was provided in the twelfth century by a brilliant theologian, Peter Lombard. He emphasized the difference between sacraments, which produce grace of themselves because Christ has attached that power to them, and sacramentals or pious practices instituted and approved by the Church.

Has the Church changed her teaching on this point of doctrine? Did she originally claim to have less than seven sacraments? Did she ever increase the number, or diminish it? No. There were always seven, used through all the centuries for the sanctifying of her children. These had been given to her by her founder; but her writers, in early times, emphasized the two or three that are the most important, while those of somewhat later date listed some sacramentals among the sacraments.

The keen mind of Peter Lombard found the correct formula, the "right word" which had been long sought for, to express exactly the meaning of a sacrament. It was then clearly seen that the Church's tradition had always taught that there are seven different ways in which God's grace may be brought to the souls of men through signs instituted by our Saviour Jesus Christ, and

that all other signs and practices are altogether of a different and inferior class. So the Second Council of Lyons, in 1274, defined as an article of Catholic faith that there are seven sacraments, no more and no less.

How the Sacraments Give Grace. We know that God may bestow grace without any visible sign, and without any sacrament. For example, a sinner who cannot go to confession may turn to God with perfect love and contrition and be at once perfectly restored to holiness—and he has received no sacrament. Day after day grace is flowing into the souls of the just, increasing their holiness, without any sacrament. But when a sacrament is administered, it gives grace, as we may say, automatically and of itself, as the theologians express it, *ex opere operato;* that is, from the work performed, provided that the recipient has certain moral and spiritual dispositions.

These dispositions are necessary, indeed, but they do not cause the grace which the sacrament gives. It comes from God through a visible sign which He has chosen, not merely as a symbol of His grace, but as an actual and infallible means of imparting it to him who is properly disposed.

Protestant Errors. At the very beginning of Protestantism grave errors arose concerning the sacraments and the means by which they sanctify the souls of men. The reformers held that man's nature was wholly bad; that he could be saved only "by faith," which meant for them a firm confidence in Christ, not a belief in Christ's teachings. According to some of them, if this "faith" exists in man's soul, good works are not necessary for salvation. *Pecca fortiter et crede fortius* ("Sin strongly and believe more strongly") was a well-known motto of Luther, who lived up to the first clause of it at least. "The sacraments do not produce grace, but are merely pledges of God's good will towards us, merely signs that we profess Christianity." And so they reduced the number to two: Baptism and the Eucharist; and the latter became simply the taking of bread and wine in memory of Christ's promises. Then other sects rejected infant Baptism, and still others abolished the sacraments altogether.

Far otherwise is the teaching of the Catholic Church. She holds that God's grace brings interior purification, that it makes us really holy, that it imparts to our souls a divine and heavenly character even in this life. She teaches that our blessed Saviour has chosen certain outward signs as channels by which we are thus elevated and sanctified. And she has defined that there are seven of these channels, by which grace is brought to our souls according to our needs and our dispositions. These are the holy sacraments.

The Author of the Sacraments. The Council of Trent defines that the seven sacraments were all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. If there is such power in a certain action combined with certain words that through it supernatural grace is given to a human soul, that power must be of supernatural origin. No human authority could possibly cause that visible and external sign to produce that invisible and internal effect.

Some of the older theologians held that some of the sacraments were instituted by the Apostles, acting with power granted to them by our Lord; but, though the Council of Trent does not say that Christ established them directly and immediately, this is now the general opinion. It is true that we do not find all of them mentioned in the Scriptural narrative, but the teaching of our Church is that each of the seven sacraments was given to mankind by our Blessed Lord, and that from their institution by Him they receive their efficacy and power.

Matter, Form and Minister. According to the teaching of Catholic theologians, each sacrament contains two necessary things: first, a certain outward sign or material which is used, and which is called its "matter"; second, certain words which express the reason why that matter is used or applied, and which are known as the "form." The discussion of the matter and form of the different sacraments will be left to future chapters, which will treat of each in detail.

Also, each sacrament must have a "minister," the one who uses the matter and pronounces the form, and has the intention of administering the sacrament. For Baptism, the minister may be of either sex and of any rational age. For Penance, the Holy

Eucharist and Extreme Unction, he must be a priest. For the administering of Holy Orders he must be a bishop, and for Confirmation he is usually, though not necessarily, of that rank. Finally, for Matrimony, the ministers of the sacrament are the parties who receive it, as we shall explain in its proper place.

In order that the person thus qualified may be really the minister of a sacrament, it is necessary that he have "the intention of doing what the Church does." Personal holiness is not required for valid administration. Absolution given by a sinful priest will be just as efficacious as that given by a saint. That absolution is a sacrilege, indeed, for him who pronounces it (without grave necessity) while in a state of sin, but it brings holiness, nevertheless, to the sinner who receives it. In other words, the effect of a sacrament does not depend on the worthiness of its minister, and it is well that this should be so; for who can guarantee that this or that priest or bishop is in the state of grace? We hope that he is, but we do not know. He is God's agent in the dispensing of His mysteries and graces; but the revealer of these mysteries and the source of these graces is Jesus Christ, and the worthiness or unworthiness of the agent does not change the nature of the gifts nor the bounty of the giver.

However, though personal holiness is not required, intention is necessary. Let us explain this. If I administer a sacrament, I must have the intention at least of doing something which the Church considers to be a sacred rite. I may not believe in that sacrament; I may look upon it as a superstition; I may not believe in the Catholic Church; I may not believe in God; but if I seriously perform the necessary action and utter the necessary words, the sacrament is administered as effectively as though it were given by a believer and a saint.

The Effects of the Sacraments. The sacraments give two kinds of grace, sanctifying and actual; three of them imprint an indelible mark or character on the soul, as will be explained in its own place.

All the sacraments give sanctifying grace. Baptism and Penance are often called "sacraments of the dead," because they were

instituted to raise the soul "from death to life," that is, from sin to sanctity. The grace which they give is known as the first sanctifying grace. The others, the "sacraments of the living," augment the grace which the soul already possesses; and what they give is called the second sanctifying grace. If Penance be received when the soul is already in the state of grace, it acts as a sacrament of the living, increasing God's grace in that soul.

All the sacraments also bestow actual graces, varying according to their nature—or rather, they give us the right to receive these graces whenever we need them. For example, the actual graces of Baptism are the helps which the baptized person will need through his future years to preserve his baptismal innocence and be a true child of God.

Such are the wonderful gifts which God, in His infinite mercy, has bestowed on us through the ministry of His Church, for our sanctification and salvation. They were prefigured in the Old Law by the seven-branched candlestick which shed light in the temple of God. They give grace to us according to our needs, through the merits of Him who instituted them, sanctifying grace that makes us worthy of His love, and actual graces that help us to show our love for Him by loyalty which manifests itself in the faithful keeping of His Commandments.

Chapter XX

BAPTISM

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in His infinite mercy, has given us a sacrament which makes us by adoption children of His heavenly Father, enrolls us as members of His Church, and restores to us our right to eternal happiness with Him in the kingdom of His glory. It is a sacrament of regeneration, a spiritual birth into the higher life of holiness. It is the door by which all must enter the Church of God.

That sacrament is Baptism. Its name comes from the Greek *baptismos,* dipping or immersion in water. It was prefigured by the "Baptism of penance" given by Saint John the Baptist, who immersed his disciples in the River Jordan to signify the repentance and renewal by which man was to be cleansed and restored to God's love. This was not a sacrament, but merely a ceremony by which the future Christian sacrament of Baptism was foretold and symbolized.

A Necessary Sacrament. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Unless a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Such were the words of our Lord to Nicodemus (John iii. 3); and they show us clearly that the sacrament of Baptism is necessary to salvation. They show that the same Spirit of God that "brooded over the waters" at the creation of the world effects the regeneration of fallen man through the water of Baptism. As the earth, in the words of Saint Peter in his second Epistle (iii. 5), rose out of water at the bidding of God, so the supernatural world of grace and glory has its beginning in water by God's express command.

He commissioned His Apostles not only to preach His doctrines to all men, but to administer this sacrament to all. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). That glorious work was begun on Pentecost; and when Saint Peter had preached with fiery eloquence to the people of Jerusalem, they were filled with fear, and cried out: "What must we do, men and brethren?" And Peter answered: "Do penance, and *be baptized,* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, whomsoever the Lord shall call" (Acts ii. 37-39).

Baptism is so necessary that without it we cannot obtain salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). However, when the actual sacrament cannot be received, its place may be supplied; namely, by the "Baptism of blood" or the "Baptism of desire." Let us explain this. In the early days of Christianity long instruction and preparation were prescribed for candidates before they were admitted to membership in the Church. It frequently happened that some of these, not yet baptized, fell into the hands of the persecutors and died bravely for their faith. Thus they were "baptized in their own blood," and won heaven. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. x. 39). And there have been others as well, in every age, who have received the gift of faith but have not been able to receive Baptism. For such as these, as death approaches, an act of perfect love of God remits all sin, whether original or actual, and gives sanctifying grace. This is "Baptism of desire," meaning an ardent desire to be saved and a firm purpose to do all that is necessary to secure salvation. This desire need not be explicit; the person does not even need to know that there is such a thing as Baptism. It is sufficient to have the wish to do all that God requires. These substitutes for Baptism are not sacraments, even though through God's mercy they produce sacramental effects.

The Institution of Baptism. Like all the other sacraments, Baptism was given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospels do not tell us when He instituted it, but we may safely assume that it was before His sufferings began. It is intended to be the first of the sacraments, giving a right to the others, and we believe, therefore, that the Apostles received it some time before their Holy Communion at the Last Supper. There is an ancient tradition that our Lord baptized Peter, who in turn conferred the sacrament on his brother Andrew, by whom James and John were then baptized, and that they administered it to the others. When our Saviour sent them forth to preach and baptize (or, at the latest, after Pentecost, when their active ministry began) the obligation of receiving Baptism became binding on all mankind.

The Effects of the Sacrament. Baptism washes away the stain of original sin. That guilt, which was on the soul of each of us at birth, had cut us off from God; but the merits of our Saviour, "the seed of the woman," are brought to us through this sacrament of regeneration. We are united to Christ, who came to save us. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). And if the guilt of actual sin be on the soul at the time of Baptism, this is also remitted. Christ, through His infinite merits, gives us a full pardon for all our sins, original and actual, mortal and venial. All the guilt is washed away, and not only the guilt, but all the penalty. If death should come then, there would be neither eternal nor temporal punishment, no hell, no purgatory. Baptism is "the fountain of living water, springing up into life everlasting" (John iv. 14). It gives the "first sanctifying grace," by which the soul is made supernaturally pleasing to God, the wedding garment which cannot be taken away except by subsequent grievous sin.

Baptism makes us "children of God." We receive a new principle of life within us, and hence are said to be regenerated, or born again. In the words of St. John, we receive "a power to become the sons of God," and this sonship renews our right to heaven. "If sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17). We receive also the three great

theological virtues, faith, hope and charity, as well as the moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. We receive the right to actual graces by which, when we need them, we will be strengthened to preserve our innocence, to profess our faith, and to keep the promises made by us or for us at our Baptism.

This sacrament, like two others, imprints on the soul a spiritual and indelible mark. This is called its "character." It is like an impression made on a disc of metal which transforms it into a coin of the realm. It stamps the soul with the distinguishing mark of a Christian; that mark is never effaced. It will remain forever, either for our greater glory in heaven or our greater shame in hell. It dedicates us to God, enlists us in His service, and empowers us to offer acceptable worship to Him. It is in the nature of a consecration. While a thing remains consecrated it cannot be consecrated again; therefore Baptism can be received only once. In the natural order, man is born only once, and so is it in the order of grace. This sacrament was given to us chiefly as a remedy for original sin, and this, once removed, cannot be incurred again. Other sins may come, indeed; but for these another remedy is provided by God's mercy, the sacrament of Penance.

The Essentials. Let us now explain the requirements for the sacrament of Baptism. The "matter" used is water, which, in our ordinary life, is the chief cleansing agent, and is therefore very appropriately employed in the conferring of the sacrament which cleanses us from original sin. For solemn Baptism, the water should be specially blessed, with an admixture of holy oils. For private Baptism the use of ordinary water is lawful.

It is applied in any one of three ways: by immersion, which is the putting of the whole body under water; by aspersion, or sprinkling; and by infusion, or the pouring of the water on the head. Any one of these three is valid; but the licit mode for us is the last-mentioned, infusion. Immersion is still used in various schismatic Churches and by some Protestant sects. It was the prevailing method for many centuries, all over the world. St. Thomas speaks of it as "the more common practice" in his

time, the thirteenth century. But the Church's tradition has always been that Baptism in any of these three ways is perfectly valid; and gradually the practice prevailed of using the simplest and most convenient mode, the pouring of water. According to the Ritual, it is to be applied in a threefold pouring, which must be copious enough to flow upon and wet the skin.

The Form and the Minister. It is necessary, when pouring the water, to use a form of words which will express the purpose for which the water is applied. "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." In our Latin rite the form must be exactly this; but in some Eastern Churches the use of equivalent words is permitted. In the Greek Church it is: "The servant of Christ, N., is baptized in the name," etc.

Who can administer Baptism? Any one who has the use of reason. The minister is, in most cases, a priest, for the sacrament is usually given in solemn form, with ceremonies which only a priest is authorized to supply. A deacon, by virtue of his sacred order, has the power of administering solemn Baptism, but he may not use that power except by special permission. When Baptism is given "of necessity," on account of danger of death, it may be administered by any one, a Catholic, a heretic or a pagan, provided that he has the intention of doing what Christ ordained or what the Church practises.

Why is this so? Why can any one, even a non-Christian, administer this Christian sacrament? Because it is so necessary. From the earliest times the Church has held that the ministry of a priest is not essential. We read in the Acts of the Apostles of the baptizing done by Philip the Deacon; and the councils of the Church, as early as the fourth century, defined that Baptism is a real and effective sacrament even when administered by one who is not of the fold of Christ.

Baptism is sometimes given conditionally; that is, when there is doubt whether a person has been validly baptized, the water is poured again and the form is repeated, thus: "If thou hast not been baptized, I baptize thee," etc. Such a doubt often exists in the case of converts from Protestantism; for, although many sects

administer Baptism, we can seldom be sure that the water was properly applied, or that the necessary words were used, or that the baptizer had the proper intention. And so the Church has prescribed that, to remove all doubt, a conditional repetition is necessary in dubious cases.

The Dispositions. Baptism, when given to an infant, is always efficacious. The infant can put no obstacle in the way, and the Church supplies the necessary intention. But he who has attained the use of reason must have a desire to be baptized; otherwise the sacrament is absolutely invalid. He has free will, and God, although imposing on him the obligation of receiving Baptism, does not force him to do so, and does not compel him to be baptized against his will. And, even if he desires Baptism, there is a further requirement: he must have faith and contrition.

Suppose that he has not; what then? If at a later date he arouses in himself a spirit of faith and repentance, the sacrament then produces its effect, removing original sin and all actual sin up to the time when it was administered.

The Ceremonies. Ancient and symbolic rites accompany the solemn administration of Baptism. A brief outline of these will aid us in understanding the effects of the sacrament: what graces it gives, and what virtues it infuses into the soul.

First come the interrogations: "What dost thou ask of the Church of God?" "Faith." "To what does faith bring thee?" "To life everlasting," and a warning is added, that charity is also necessary. The priest breathes on the face of the child, a symbol of the coming of the Spirit of God. He makes the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast, that the Lord may be ever present in its mind and heart. Salt, emblematic of wisdom, is put into the child's mouth, that it may desire the taste of spiritual and not of worldly things. A solemn exorcism is pronounced, to free it from the dominion of Satan. The priest's stole is laid upon it, leading it, as it were, into the Church of God. The Creed and the Our Father are recited, as a profession of faith and an act of worship. After another exorcism, the ceremony of the *Ephpheta* takes place, consisting of the applying of saliva to the ears and

nostrils of the child, reminding us of the curing of the deaf-mute in the Gospel, and symbolizing the opening of the senses to the truths of God and to the sweet odor of virtue. A renunciation follows, of Satan and all his works and pomps; and an anointing is made on the child's breast and back, with the oil of catechumens, in the form of a cross, that on the breast signifying the open profession of the faith of Christ, and that on the back the patient carrying of life's burdens. Then comes another profession of faith, after which the sacrament itself is administered. The head receives an unction of holy chrism, as a sign of consecration to God. A white cloth, placed on the head, typifies sanctifying grace, and is a survival of the white baptismal robe of ancient times; a lighted candle, presented to the baptized person, is a symbol of the light of faith which should thereafter fill his soul, and of the flame of charity which should lead him to love the merciful God into whose kingdom he has been received through holy Baptism.

Chapter XXI

CONFIRMATION

AMONG the seven sacraments of our Church there is one which may be called the completion and perfecting of Baptism. It confirms and increases the grace which was begun in us by the sacrament of regeneration; this is expressed, in the rite by which it is administered, by these very appropriate words taken from the sixty-third Psalm: "Confirm, O Lord, what thou hast wrought in us."

After having been released from the bondage of Satan, after having received the graces of holy Baptism, we receive also in Confirmation spiritual weapons with which to defend ourselves against the enemies, internal and external, that assail us day by day as we journey through life. "Now he that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God, who also hath sealed us and hath given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22).

How many temptations beset mortal man in the world of to-day! The pursuit of wealth and pleasure, the striving for earthly luxury would seem to be the sole end and aim of human existence. Everywhere there are allurements, tempting us from the narrow path that leads to salvation. And yet, in millions of souls, the virtues of faith and hope and charity are still resplendent, and countless servants of God still persevere in His grace and do His holy will. Why? Because there is a God-given sacrament, instituted especially for the imparting of strength, and it is called Confirmation.

Its Definition. "Confirmation is a sacrament through which we receive the Holy Ghost, to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ." It takes its name from its

effect, a confirming of the effects of Baptism, a strengthening of the soul already cleansed from original sin, that it may be ever faithful to its baptismal promises, ever strong in the Christian faith, ever brave and loyal in time of danger and temptation.

In the Scriptures and during the early ages of the Church it was known by various other names. It is called "the seal of the Lord," because it imprints a seal or mark on the soul. Saint Paul admonished the Ephesians (iv. 30): "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you have been sealed unto the day of redemption." In the Acts of the Apostles it is called "the imposition of hands." And later on, in many parts of the world, it was known as "the anointing," "the chrism of salvation," or simply "the chrism"; this last name is still retained in the Greek Church.

A Real Sacrament. Although Confirmation is intended to bring about a completion of the effects of Baptism, it is nevertheless a distinct sacrament. It has a different matter and form, ordinarily a different minister, and vastly different effects. By Baptism we are, as it were, born into the life of grace; by Confirmation we arrive at man's estate in that supernatural life. By Baptism we become "children of God"; by Confirmation we are made "soldiers of Jesus Christ." In Baptism we receive the Holy Ghost, indeed, to cleanse us from sin; in Confirmation we receive Him more fully, to perfect us in virtue.

Confirmation adds a new character and dignity to the soul. This we may illustrate by an example or comparison. An immigrant enters this country of ours, with no claim upon it and no duty towards it. But after a time he becomes "naturalized"; that is, he assumes the character and the duties of an American citizen. Then a war breaks out; he is called to aid and defend his adopted country; he enlists in the army, and thereby he acquires a new rank, a new dignity and new duties. He is a soldier.

So it is in the spiritual order. We are born into this world, poor immigrants indeed, outcasts, separated from God. We wish to become citizens of His kingdom, and this we attain through

Baptism. Later on, Confirmation enlists us in the army of the Lord, and thereby we acquire a new character; we become soldiers of Jesus Christ. And, just as a soldier in our country's army receives special training that he may be efficient in his new duties, so the soldiers of Christ are strengthened by special graces in the holy sacrament of Confirmation.

The Institution of the Sacrament. We have already stated that no ceremony is a sacrament unless it was established as such by our Lord Jesus Christ. In regard to Confirmation, there is no mention in the Gospel as to the fact or the time of its institution, but there is an ancient tradition that it took place on the day of the Last Supper, Holy Thursday. But, though we have no Scriptural warrant for its divine origin, our Church has made it a matter of faith that Confirmation is not merely a ceremony, as some Protestants declare, nor a course of Christian instruction given to children at the age of reason, as other sects hold. She teaches that it is "a true and proper sacrament," one of the seven instituted by our Blessed Lord.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles (viii. 17) that Peter and James went into Samaria to confirm the new Christians there; and this they did by "the imposing of hands," which, as stated above, was used as a name for the sacrament. The Scripture narrative does not mention the use of chrism, but it was undoubtedly applied, for anointing with holy oil is alluded to elsewhere in the New Testament.

Thus, in this act of the two Apostles, we have the three requisites of a real sacrament. We have the outward sign, expressing the purport of the sacrament; we have the inward grace, the communication of the Holy Spirit of God; and we have divine institution, because the Apostles could not have used an outward sign as a certain and unfailing means of grace unless our Lord had so ordained. We see, then, that our Church has ample warrant for her constant belief and teaching that Confirmation is one of the seven sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ.

The Matter of Confirmation. This sacrament is administered by anointing with chrism, accompanied by "the imposition of

hands," a ceremony which is symbolic of the descent of the Holy Ghost into the souls of men. In the present practice of the Church this imposition is not made by actually placing the hands on the persons who are being confirmed, but by extending them over all collectively. Then the bishop anoints each on the forehead with the holy chrism.

This takes its name from a Greek word signifying a scented ointment. It is the most sacred of the three holy oils, which are solemnly blessed in every cathedral church on Holy Thursday of each year. It is olive oil, with which balsam has been mixed. Just as in Baptism the use of water is symbolic of spiritual cleansing, so in Confirmation the use of chrism signifies the imparting of spiritual strength. Olive oil has various meanings, arising from its many uses. In certain countries it is one of the chief necessaries of life, used in preparing food, as a remedy, and as a means of furnishing light; in ancient times it was employed by athletes as an ointment, to give suppleness to their muscles. Particularly in this last sense it is appropriately used in the administration of Confirmation, to indicate that the graces of the sacrament render us strong and active in our life-long conflict with the spirit of evil.

The balsam, which is mingled with the oil, is dissolved resin obtained from the terebinth tree or certain other plants. It typifies freedom from corruption, and the sweet odor of virtue. In some Oriental rites other perfumes and spices are used in addition to the balsam.

The anointing with the holy chrism is made on the forehead, to indicate that we must profess our faith openly; it is applied in the form of a cross, to show that we must be proud of our allegiance to Him who died on the cross of Calvary.

The Form of the Sacrament. While the chrism is being applied the bishop uses a form of words which indicate the purpose of the unction: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Are these words, as we use them in our Latin ceremonial, essential to the sacrament? No. In the Greek Church, which

administers Confirmation validly and licitly, the form is: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost," and this has been in use from very early times. Our present form, given above, dates back only to the twelfth century. Before that time, a very common form was: "I confirm thee in the name of the Father," etc. In some parts of the world these words were used: "The sign of the cross with eternal life"; and elsewhere another very expressive form was employed: "Receive the sign of the cross with the chrism of salvation, in Christ Jesus, unto eternal life." And so we see from this variety of forms that it was evidently the intention of our Lord and the practice of His Church that the sacrament of Confirmation could be validly administered with any words that sufficiently indicate the graces given.

After the anointing, the bishop gives the person confirmed a slight blow on the cheek, saying, *pax tecum* ("Peace be with thee"). This symbolizes the persecutions to which we may be possibly exposed on account of our faith, and reminds us that as soldiers of Jesus Christ we may have to suffer for Him. This ceremony is not found in ancient rituals, and is not a part of the matter or form of the sacrament.

The Minister of Confirmation. As the Catechism tells us, "the bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation." This means that, as a rule, no one else has power to administer it. In our part of the world, and, in fact, in the whole Western Church, this sacrament is always given by a bishop, except in very special cases. If a missionary were going into the middle of Africa or to the remoter parts of China, he might receive permission from the Holy See to carry holy chrism and to administer the sacrament of Confirmation to his converts, who otherwise would never be able to receive it, since they could never have access to a bishop. Among the Eastern Christians, both Catholic and schismatic, Confirmation has been for many centuries administered by priests; in the Churches which are united to the Roman See this custom is tacitly permitted.

The Person Confirmed. Any one who has been baptized may be confirmed. Because of the indelible mark which Confirmation

imprints on the soul, it can be received only once. Just as Baptism makes a man permanently a Christian, just as Holy Order makes him a priest forever, so Confirmation enrolls him as a soldier of Christ; his enlistment never expires and never needs renewal.

For many centuries, in all parts of the world, it was a common practice to confirm children immediately after Baptism. This is still done in some Eastern Catholic Churches, by special permission of the Holy See. But it is now the rule among us to defer the administration of this sacrament until the young Christian is going forth into the world to fight for his faith and his soul against the world, the flesh and the devil. He is then at an age when he can be instructed in his religion and prepared to receive this sacrament with all its supernatural effects.

What dispositions are necessary for the worthy reception of Confirmation? Merely to be in the state of grace. If one were to receive it while in mortal sin, he would commit a sacrilege. Would he be thereafter deprived of the graces of this great sacrament? Not necessarily. As soon as he cleansed his soul from sin, the gifts and graces which were withheld from him at Confirmation would be bestowed upon him. The Church requires also that those who receive this sacrament shall be sufficiently instructed in Christian doctrine, that they shall know not only the things that are absolutely necessary to salvation, but also the other important articles of faith. Confirmation is not necessary to salvation. We can reach heaven without it; but salvation and heaven are easier to attain if we have received it. This sacrament is one of the means instituted by our Lord to aid us in our conflict with the enemies of our souls, and the reception of it cannot be wilfully neglected without grievous sin. It is the weapon with which God wishes to arm us, and the wilful slighting of His goodness may imperil our soul's salvation.

The Grace of the Sacrament. What is the effect of this sacrament of Confirmation? Like the other "sacraments of the living," it increases sanctifying grace in our souls, and it has two particular effects of its own. First, it increases and perfects the grace of Baptism; second, it gives us "the plenitude of the Holy Spirit,"

or the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Let us see what these things mean.

Baptism makes us children of God; we are "born again" into a spiritual life. But this birth leaves us weak, "like new-born infants," as St. Peter tells us (1 Epist. ii. 2); and Confirmation comes afterwards to strengthen us for the long combat with evil, to make us good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Thus it perfects the work begun at our Baptism, as is well expressed in the bishop's words: "Strengthen, O Lord, this work which Thou hast wrought in us."

In Confirmation, under the title of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, we receive the plenitude of the Spirit of God. Does this signify that no further grace can be given to us thereafter? It does not. It means that we receive that measure of grace which suffices to make us perfect Christians, and that God gives us a right and title to all the gifts and graces which will be at any time necessary for us to maintain our faith and to profess it fearlessly. These will vary in different persons, according to their circumstances and state of life. Some will need many, some only a few.

We read in the Scriptures of certain miraculous powers which were sometimes conferred by this sacrament: the gift of healing, of speaking foreign tongues, of prophecy, etc. These are not ordinary effects of Confirmation; they were given in those early days to aid the growth of the infant Church. As they are no longer necessary we do not now receive them, but God gives us the great gifts and abundant graces which are required for the maintenance of our faith and the effective strengthening of our loyalty to Him.

In this sacrament the Holy Ghost illumines the intellect with the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel and knowledge. He inflames the heart with piety. He strengthens the will with the gift of fortitude. He chastens the soul by the gift of holy fear. These are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

"Now he that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 22).

Chapter XXII

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

WE come now to the central object of Catholic worship, the living presence of Jesus Christ on our altars in the greatest gift of His love, the Holy Eucharist. This is the greatest of the sacraments, surpassing all the others in dignity; for while the others are channels of grace, this one contains the author of grace, Jesus Christ Himself. The other sacraments exist only during the act of administration, that is, while the matter and form are being applied; this one exists from the time of the consecration of the matter, and continues as long as the species of the matter remains incorrupt. In the others the substance of the matter does not change when the sacrament comes into being; the water remains water, the oil remains oil, etc.; but in this sacrament the matter is changed absolutely into another substance, into the living body and blood and soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God.

We call this sacrament the Eucharist, which means the thanksgiving, because at its institution our Lord gave thanks to His Father, and because it is our chief act of thanksgiving to God. It is called Holy Communion, because when we receive it we are brought into communion with Christ and with each member of His Church. "We, being many, are one bread and one body, all that partake of one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). We speak of it as the sacred Host (which means a victim offered in sacrifice), because it is the living body of Christ, the victim for our salvation. And when it is received as a preparation for the passage into eternity we call it the Viaticum, the food for a journey.

The Church's Doctrine. The Catechism defines it thus: "The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament which contains the body and

blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine." Let us see what these words mean.

The uniform doctrine of the Catholic Church, held and taught since her beginning, is that in the Holy Eucharist our blessed Saviour is *really and truly present* under the appearance of bread and wine. We Catholics believe and have always believed that in this sacrament, after the words of consecration have been uttered, is contained the living body and blood of Jesus Christ, *truly, really* and *substantially*.

Note these words, "truly, really and substantially." They are quoted from the decrees of the Council of Trent and from the Creed of Pius IV.

That body and blood are *truly* present, not in any figurative or symbolic way. They are *really* present, not merely in the soul of the communicant. They are *substantially* present, that is, they exist in that sacrament as substances, and not merely in effect or power.

Transubstantiation. Our Catholic faith teaches that the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of the body of Christ, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance of His blood; it teaches, moreover, that under the appearances of bread there is present not merely His body but His blood and soul and divinity as well; and that, in like manner, under the appearances of wine there is present not merely His blood but the whole Person of our Saviour.

In this change, the outward appearances are not altered or affected in the least. What was bread is bread no longer, but it still has the form and color and taste of bread. What was wine is wine no longer, though to our senses it is unchanged.

The appearance of a thing is not the thing itself. Through our senses we perceive the various phenomena by which we distinguish one thing from another. We call these *accidents,* because they may or may not be in the thing without its ceasing to exist. Underlying them there is what we call the *substance* of the thing, the permanent cause to which our reason refers them. If we had different senses, the thing, while remaining the same in substance,

might have a different appearance, different accidents. On the other hand, we may conceive that a thing or substance might cease to exist, while its appearances or accidents remain unchanged and perceptible, and that another substance might replace the first without manifesting its own proper appearances or accidents. The substance may change while the accidents remain.

This is precisely what happens in the Holy Eucharist. The consecrated elements are, to all outward appearance, still bread and wine; the form and color and taste and smell are those of bread and wine. But we *know* that the substances of the body and blood of Christ have replaced the substances of bread and wine. How do we know it? By divine revelation, which teaches us that our blessed Saviour wrought this miracle and mystery at the Last Supper and commissioned His Apostles to do likewise in commemoration of Him.

We Catholics believe that under the appearances of bread and wine separately Christ exists whole and entire. Under the species of bread we do not receive merely the body of the Saviour; under the species of wine not merely His blood. The "hypostatic union" of Christ's divinity to His humanity is indissoluble. His body is a living body. "Christ, being risen from the dead, dieth no more" (Rom. vi. 9). Being a living body, it cannot be disconnected from His blood or His soul or His divinity. His glorified human nature cannot be mutilated or divided into parts. The species of bread, being solid, is indicated, indeed, in the words used by our Lord and by the priest as containing the Body of Christ, and the species of wine, being liquid, as containing His Blood; but this was done by our blessed Saviour to symbolize, as it were, the heavenly "meat and drink" of which He spoke when He promised everlasting life to those who should partake of it: "My flesh is meat, indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him; and I will raise him up at the last day." But *under each element* He is present, real, living and entire, the eternal God united to a human nature in the Person of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

It follows from this that we adore Him under the species of bread, or of wine, or of both; and that when the Eucharist is given in Holy Communion we receive Him even though we communicate under one form only. In our Latin rite (and in some others as well) the faithful do not now drink from the chalice; but, under the form of bread alone, they receive our Lord just as truly and completely as do those of other rites in which Communion is given under both forms.

It follows also that, at least after the actual division of either species into parts, Christ is present in each part. If the consecrated Host be separated into pieces, or if the contents of the chalice be poured out in small quantities, He is present in each fragment and in each drop.

More than that—and here we come to a most wonderful mystery—He is present, whole and entire, in every one of the countless Hosts that exist throughout the world. The one living Person of Christ is in my church, even though in its tabernacle there are many Hosts; and that same living Person is in every other church as well. Christ is here, in His bodily presence; He is in Asia and in Africa in His bodily presence also, and still there is but one Christ. When I, here in America, receive Holy Communion, I receive my God; and when, ten thousand miles away and at precisely the same moment, another Catholic partakes of the same sacrament, the same God comes to him.

A Permanent Sacrament. The Eucharistic presence of Christ continues from the instant of consecration until the species has become corrupted. That is, if the sacred Host has become mouldy or the contents of the chalice sour, our Lord has discontinued His presence therein. But during the permanence of the species He is present. He is indeed "with us all days, even to the consummation of the world"; for in the tabernacle of every altar He dwells under the Eucharistic species, as an object of our adoration and that we may be able everywhere to receive Him in Holy Communion.

The *adorableness* of the Eucharist follows necessarily from the fact that it is a permanent sacrament. The same supreme wor-

ship that is due to God is also due to the God-man, Jesus Christ. The same Christ who is in heaven is on our altars in the Eucharist. And just as we, here upon earth, adore Him in heaven, just as we hope to adore Him there for all eternity, so we rightly adore Him in this wonderful sacrament of the altar, for He is present there as truly and as completely as He is on His heavenly throne.

Such, dear reader, is a necessarily brief statement of the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the Blessed Eucharist. Let us read on, and see upon what proofs that doctrine is based.

Proofs from Scripture. The real and living presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is shown so clearly in various parts of the New Testament that it is amazing that it can be controverted by anyone who accepts that Testament as a portion of the revealed Word of God.

Take the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. It tells us of a miracle which manifested our Saviour's love and compassion, the feeding of five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. And it tells of the events of the next day, when, in the synagogue of Capharnaum, He spoke to those for whose benefit that miracle had been wrought.

He urged His hearers not to seek the meat which perisheth, but that which endureth unto life everlasting. "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and *the bread that I will give is my flesh,* for the life of the world. . . . Amen, amen, I say to you: Except you *eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood,* you shall not have life in you. He that *eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood,* hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For *my flesh is meat indeed:* and *my blood is drink indeed.* He that *eateth my flesh,* and *drinketh my blood,* abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that

came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

Now, here our Lord declares distinctly that He will give a bread which will be His flesh, and a drink which will be His blood. He was not speaking figuratively. His Jewish hearers understood His words in their literal sense, and refused to believe them because of the apparent impossibility that they could be true. Our Saviour's plain statement seemed to be incredible. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" He did not attempt to explain away the obvious meaning of His promise; on the contrary, He solemnly confirmed their interpretation of it. A number of His disciples, hearing His words, cried out: "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?" They had been His friends; they had heard His teachings and had witnessed His miracles; but when He declared something which seemed to be impossible, their faith became weak, and the Gospel tells us that "many went back, and walked with him no more." Did He try to win them back by showing that His words were figurative? No; He turned to the Apostles, the twelve whom He had chosen to be the first leaders of His Church, and said: "Will you also leave me?" And St. Peter, always the first to speak and to act, made a magnificent profession of faith. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The Fulfillment of the Promise. Time passed on, and the shadow of His approaching Passion darkened around our Blessed Lord. He knew that His death was near, and that, although He would rise from the dead, His stay on earth thereafter would be brief. "When he had loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He wished to be with them "all days," not merely dwelling in their souls by His grace, but really present in their midst throughout the world in a form which would permit them to "eat His flesh and drink His blood, that they might have life in them."

The time of the Pasch had come. The Jewish law enjoined the eating of the paschal lamb, a type of the long-expected Saviour. That figurative sacrifice of the Old Law was to pass away forever.

The Lamb of God was to die for the sins of men. Our Blessed Lord sat at a supper-table in Jerusalem, with His Apostles, and there He fulfilled the wondrous promise which He had made at Capharnaum.

Here is the testimony of St. Matthew: "And whilst they were at table, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat. This is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of my blood, of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (xxvi. 26-28).

In almost identical language does St. Mark tell us of the giving of that heavenly food: "And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye; this is my body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks he gave to them; and they all drank of it. And he said: This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many" (xiv. 22-24).

St. Luke describes it thus: "And taking the bread he gave thanks, and broke, and gave to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice of the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you" (xxii. 19, 20).

The testimony of these Evangelists is corroborated by that of St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 23-25): "For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and, giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat. This is my body which shall be delivered for you. This do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice of the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of me."

At that Last Supper, just as at Capharnaum, our blessed Saviour was not speaking figuratively. He was abolishing the symbolic

sacrifices of the Old Law. He was substituting the reality for the figure. He was making His last will and testament. He was laying down a precept for perpetual observance. He was showing His love for His disciples and for all mankind more clearly than He had ever done hitherto. He was not leading His future Church into error. He is God, infinite in power and wisdom. And when He declared that He was giving His body it was truly His body; when He told the Apostles to drink of the chalice of His blood, it was His blood that they received.

Any attempt to explain away the obvious meaning of these words of Christ places its makers on a par with the unbelieving Jews of old, who said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Turn to an earlier chapter of that epistle of St. Paul. He is speaking of the guilt of certain Christians who partook of meat that had been offered to idols, and he enforces his reproof by reminding them that, as Christians, they receive the body and blood of their Saviour. "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body, all that partake of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 16).

And the final evidence from that great Apostle will be found in the eleventh chapter. After describing, as quoted above, the events of the Last Supper, he goes on to say: "Therefore, whosoever shall eat of this bread or drink of the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*"

Why? If it were bread only, or wine only, how could the unworthy reception of it cause such awful guilt? But, as the Apostle has just said, our Lord has declared that that bread has become His body, and that chalice of wine has become His blood. Hence comes the guilt if they be received unworthily, "because he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Why should judgment (that is, condemnation) come upon a man who ate and drank mere bread and wine? And how could he "discern the Lord's body" if it were not present?

From Tradition. The teaching of the Catholic Church is and has always been that in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine, our living Lord is truly present. The writings of the Fathers of the early Church show us most clearly what the Catholic doctrine was in their day. Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, Hilary and Ambrose—these are only a few of the great teachers in whose writings may be found passages of wondrous beauty and clearness telling of their faith and of the faith of the Catholic Church in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Though many heresies arose and flourished and died in those early centuries, there was practically no controversy concerning this great Catholic dogma until the days of Berengarius, in the eleventh century. The defection of the Greek Church took place, and a considerable part of the Christian world was led thereby into schism; but even these, though they fell away from Catholic unity, kept their firm faith in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It remained for the "reformers" of the sixteenth century to reduce the Eucharist to a meaningless symbol. Like the Jews, they cried out: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The literal sense of the words of Christ was distorted in a different manner by each founder of a new sect; and a painstaking German named Rasperger was able to enumerate two hundred distinct interpretations of the simple words: "This is my body."

Some Futile Objections. Zwingli, one of the earliest leaders of Protestantism, argued that when Christ used these words He meant: "This *signifies* My body"; that, consequently, the bread and wine, chosen by our Lord as symbols of His body and blood, remained merely bread and wine. This is a distortion of the clear and unmistakable meaning of the Saviour's words. He said nothing about "signifying" or "symbolizing"; He uttered two clear, short sentences, denoting that what He held in His hands was no longer bread, no longer wine, but His sacred body and blood. He did not speak of an impossible thing. There is no reason why He who created bread and wine and gave them the

"accidents" by which we recognize them, and also created His own body and blood, could not replace the former substance by the latter. We believe that He did so, because at the Last Supper He declared to His Apostles that "this"; that is, what had been bread, is now His body; and that "this chalice," of what had been wine, is now His blood.

Others put forward this objection: "These words of the Saviour are simply figurative. He meant that the Church is His body—that the New Testament is His blood." A manifest absurdity! Do we eat the Church? Do we drink the New Testament? And if, in some symbolic way, we could do so, could we thereby, by partaking unworthily, bring judgment on ourselves because we do not discern the Lord's body?

There are many other attempts, more or less ingenious, but equally futile, to explain away the obvious meaning of the words of Christ and to destroy the Catholic belief which the Church of God has held since her beginning. Space will not permit us even to mention them. Their falsity is evident; for they are opposed to the revealed word of God as contained in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament, and to the uniform and unbroken tradition of the Church which has always taught that our Saviour gave Himself to us in a wonderful sacrifice and sacrament; that He deputed His Apostles and their successors to offer that sacrifice, to administer that sacrament throughout all ages; and that upon the countless altars of the world He is just as really present under the appearances of bread and wine as He was in the manger of Bethlehem under the form of a helpless babe, just as really present as when He hung on the cross of Calvary in the guise of a dying criminal, just as really present as He is on His eternal throne in heaven. He is "with us all days," in our very midst. He might have decreed that He would be present in one place only, in one central shrine where worship might be offered to Him on behalf of all mankind; but He did not do this. He is dwelling to-day in the altar-tabernacle of every parish throughout the world. You and I do not need to go on a long journey to meet Him. He is waiting for us in the nearest

church, waiting to receive our adoration, because He is our God, waiting to hearken to our petitions, because He is the giver of all good. We can assist there daily at the great sacrifice which renews and perpetuates the atonement of Calvary. More than that, daily we can "eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood," and thereby we "abide in him and he in us," according to the gracious promise made at Capharnaum. Daily we can strengthen our souls by receiving the heavenly food which He has provided in the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament of His love.

Chapter XXIII

THE MASS

OUR Catholic Church has her divine founder "with her all days," not in spirit alone, but in bodily presence. Our blessed Saviour, the incarnate Son of God, wished to abide with us and in us. In His infinite love He has devised a means by which He is enthroned on the altars of our churches in every land and in every age. He gives Himself to us as a spiritual food, bestowing His graces on us in a more abundant degree and in a more wonderful manner than He does in the other sacraments. He has left to His Church and her children a visible means of adoring Him in a most perfect manner, permitting us to be in His corporal presence and to present our homage and our petitions to Him personally—a foretaste, as it were, of the eternal vision of His glory which will be our everlasting reward when we shall see Him "face to face," and no longer under the mystic veil of the Eucharist.

This great gift of God is not only a sacrament, but a sacrifice as well; and we possess and receive the sacrament through the sacrifice. We partake of the heavenly food which our Saviour has given us, when we receive the sacrament of the Eucharist; and that sacrament comes to us through the holy sacrifice which we call the Mass, the holiest and noblest worship which the Catholic Church offers to God.

The Name of the Sacrifice. In early centuries the great sacrifice of the altar was known by various names: the breaking of bread, the Lord's Supper, the solemnity of the Lord, the sacrifice, the holy liturgy, and the Eucharist, which means thanksgiving.

We call it the Mass. Why? This English word is from the

Latin noun *missa,* derived from the verb *mittere,* to send, and signifies a dismissal. But why is it used as the name of the sacrifice? Because in the Church's ancient liturgy there were two solemn dismissals at the Mass; first, that of the catechumens (those partly instructed and not yet baptized), who were not permitted to remain in the church during the whole of the sacrifice, but were sent out after the Gospel and the sermon; second, that of the faithful at the end of the Mass, still preserved in our Masses by the announcement *Ite, missa est* ("Go, it is the dismissal") just before the blessing and the last Gospel. The word for dismissal was gradually used to denote the service from which these persons were dismissed. The French form, *Messe* was taken into England in Norman times, and was later modified into *Maesse, Masse,* and finally *Mass.* And thus we see that our English name for this august sacrifice of our Catholic Church had its origin in a ceremonial act of minor importance.

The Nature of Sacrifice. What is a sacrifice? It is the offering to God, by an authorized minister, of some visible thing which is destroyed or changed, for the purpose of acknowledging His supreme excellence and His dominion over life and death.

God is our Creator. He placed us here in this world, and He demands our homage and obedience. We are a fallen race. We have sinned against Him, and He exacts satisfaction and reparation for our sins. The main idea of sacrifice is what we call "vicarious atonement," the substituting of some victim which takes our place and satisfies God's justice in our stead. We offer this victim to God to acknowledge His infinite power and our dependence on Him for forgiveness and life eternal.

Sacrifice of some sort has been the very essence of all religion since the world began, until Protestantism abandoned the idea of Christian sacrifice because it was Catholic. In paganism as well as in Judaism, the offering of a victim was the most important act of worship. Man's religious instinct found a mode of expressing adoration, gratitude and contrition by immolating on the altar of his deity an ox, a lamb or other animal, thus substituting,

as it were, the life of the victim for his own, or by offering the fruits of the earth in thanksgiving for bounties received.

For a true sacrifice, it is necessary that some visible object be offered, for sacrifice is an act of external worship. It is offered to God only, for He alone is the Lord of life and death and the giver of all blessings. And that visible object or victim must not be merely placed on the altar, but must be destroyed, or at least must undergo some change. Nor is this all. For a true and efficacious sacrifice, divine institution is necessary. God must choose the victim; God must choose the priest. "For no man doth take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. v. 4). That a sacrifice may be acceptable to God, it must have been instituted by Him, and it must be offered to Him alone, with a victim and a priest appointed by Him. All of these conditions are fulfilled in the Holy Mass.

The Eucharistic Sacrifice. In the Christian Mass we have truly a real and acceptable sacrifice. God gave it to us. It is the highest act of worship which His Church can offer to Him, and it honors Him alone. The victim is God Himself, and He is priest as well as victim; for the man who stands at the altar is offering the sacrifice in God's name and as His vicar, exercising the power given by Him to the Apostles and their successors in the priesthood of the Church.

This daily act of sacrificial worship expresses adoration, gratitude, sorrow and petition. It is a commemoration (and, as the Council of Trent tells us, more than a commemoration) of the sacrifice of Calvary; for it is a daily world-wide renewal of the great atonement which our Saviour consummated for us. How luminous is the prophecy of Malachias: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift from your hand; for from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is offered to my name a clean oblation; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 10, 11). The imperfect sacrifices of the Jewish law were to be abolished, giving way to the perfect sacrifice which they prefigured; and a

pure and clean oblation would be offered thereafter to God throughout the world, not merely in one temple or one country, but among all the nations of the earth.

In the Book of Genesis we read of Melchisedech, the pious priest-king of Salem, who offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. Well is our blessed Saviour called, in the Psalms of David, "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech," for He, too, offers a sacrifice under the species of bread and wine. St. Paul, in the epistle to the Hebrews (chap. vii.) emphasizes this view of our Lord's priesthood; and it is clear that if He is a priest the Eucharist is a sacrifice.

The Sacrificial Act. Is the Mass really a sacrifice? If so, in what part or action does the sacrificial act occur? Not in the offering of bread and wine; not in the breaking of the Host or the admixture of the sacred species; not in the distribution of the sacrament, which we call Holy Communion. In the Mass, as in any other sacrifice, there must be a "moral destruction" or change of the victim offered. Is our Lord destroyed, as were the oxen and lambs in the Jewish worship? No; He is living eternally, and can die no more. But by the words of consecration He is placed on the altar *as if dead,* to be touched by human hands, to be food for human souls. As spiritual writers say, He is "morally destroyed"; for, while He is really entire under the species of bread and under the species of wine, by virtue of the words of the priest His body is apparently separated from His blood under the appearance of bread, and the blood from the body under the appearance of wine. His death is portrayed, as it were, for the body that was broken and the blood that was shed for us are set before us on an altar of sacrifice.

Hence the sacrifice of the Mass consists principally in the act of consecration, in the uttering of the words by which the Saviour's command is fulfilled, by which we do this in commemoration of Him. In the opinion of many, the priest's Communion is necessary for the completion of the sacrifice, because it causes the destruction of the victim in His sacramental life.

"The Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross," says the

Catechism. How? In what sense? No blood is shed on the altar. Christ does not die again. Nevertheless, He is truly offered up as He was on the cross, but in an unbloody manner. On the cross and on the altar we have the same victim and the same priest. The sacrifice of the cross redeemed us; the sacrifice of the Mass helps to bring to us the graces and merits won for us on Calvary.

Since the Church's Beginning. We have already considered the proofs of the living presence of our Saviour in the Holy Eucharist. We know that He promised Himself as a food for the life of the world; that in this sacrament He would abide in us and we in Him; that by eating His flesh and drinking His blood we shall have everlasting life. We know that at the Last Supper He changed bread and wine into His sacred body and blood, and then commissioned His Apostles to do what He had done. These things our Catholic Church knows, and believes, and practises.

In Rome we may explore the Catacombs, the refuge of the Christians of early times. There we find Catholic altars, much like those of our present-day churches; often the flat top of a martyr's tomb formed the altar-stone, which is the reason why our altars of to-day always contain the relics of saints. When, in later centuries, great Christian temples were erected, the central object in each was the altar of sacrifice, the place for the Mass. Every Father of the Church, every council, every theologian testifies to the Catholic faith in the real presence of Christ on the altar, and to the sacrificial nature and benefits of the Mass through which that presence comes. Just one quotation, from St. Ignatius, in the very first century of our Church's history: "This chalice which comes from this word of ours, Christ confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the New Testament, which oblation the Church, receiving it from the Apostles, offers in the world to God."

The Church of the Eucharist. How wonderfully our Catholic faith in the real presence shows us the truth of our Catholic Church. We have learned that the true Church must have unity and holiness and catholicity and apostolicity. The Holy Eucharist

shows most clearly that our Church possesses these qualities or marks.

Our Catholic Church is one. A priest is saying Mass. He is in unity with all other Catholic priests throughout the world, with his bishop, with Christ's vicar on earth—all believing the same in this as in all else, all finding in the holy sacrament of the altar the central object of their worship.

Our Church is holy. She has always in her midst the living presence of God, not only on her altars, but entering into the bodies and souls of her children and sanctifying them. Through that sacrifice she offers daily to God, in all her temples throughout the world, the highest and most perfect act of worship. Through that sacrament, nourishing her children with that heavenly food, she has produced the highest types of holiness that the world has ever seen.

Our Church is catholic, or universal, bringing God's truth to all men; and the Holy Mass shows her true catholicity. Day after day that spotless oblation is everywhere offered, and the faithful in every land bow in adoration before the same divine presence. Beneath the domes of mighty cathedrals, upon the altar of every parish church, even in the palm-thatched mission-hut in pagan lands, where the faces of the worshippers are different in color from that of the priest—everywhere the same great act of adoration takes place daily. The Mass in China or in Africa is the same sacrifice as ours here in civilized America.

The true Church must be an apostolic Church. It must be able to trace its history back to the Apostles of Christ. A priest stands at the altar of God, here in this twentieth century, and offers the Holy Mass. By what authority? How did he become a priest? Not by any human power. A man who is a Catholic priest must have received his priesthood from another, a bishop of the Catholic Church, he in turn from another, and so on and on, until he finds his most remote spiritual ancestor in one of those who sat at a supper-table in Jerusalem and who heard the command: "As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in commemoration of me."

Thus we see, dear reader, from the Holy Eucharist the truth of our Catholic Church. We see how the living presence of the one God upon the countless altars of the world, in all the centuries since the days of the Apostles, is a proof and a type of that unity which keeps all her children one in faith and in loyalty, of that holiness which she imparts to all mankind because she has in her midst the all-holy One, of that catholicity by which she gives God's truth and grace to all men, and of that apostolicity which she alone possesses because she alone was founded on the rock of Peter.

That Church which has Jesus on her altars in His sacramental presence is the true Church of Christ.

Chapter XXIV

HOLY COMMUNION

OUR blessed Saviour gave the Holy Eucharist to the world for various purposes and reasons. He wished to be "with us all days," not only in spirit but in body, to be in our midst in every land and every age, visibly present on our altars although under the veil of the sacramental species, so that we whom He loves may kneel in adoration before Him just as truly as we shall in heaven. "When He had loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He wished to be the central object of the worship of mankind, not only on His heavenly throne but in the world which He had redeemed. He established a sacrifice which is daily offered in every land, as the prophet Malachias has foretold. And in His infinite love He wished to do even more than this for our fallen race. Man, even when redeemed, needs grace and strength which only God can give. The sacrament and sacrifice of the Eucharist were instituted principally that Jesus might give Himself to us as a heavenly nourishment, that His sacred body and blood might be a spiritual food for men.

The Apostles' Communion. We described in a previous chapter the institution of that great sacrament of love. When our blessed Saviour, at the Last Supper, took bread and wine and declared: "This is my body, this is my blood," He joined a command to these words of consecration: "Take ye and eat of this. . . . Drink ye all of this." The Apostles received their first Holy Communion from the hands of Him whose living presence entered into their bodies and souls. He was the minister of that sacrament. He was the sacrament itself.

Eleven were worthy; one was unworthy. Eleven were filled

with faith and believed the words of their Master; one was a hypocrite and an unbeliever, and his first and only Communion was a sacrilege. Our Saviour knew the wickedness that filled the heart of Judas, but He allowed him to stain his soul with that awful guilt, just as He permitted the subsequent sin of betrayal. "Amen, I say to you, one of you is about to betray me."

Why did our Blessed Lord permit that unworthy Communion? Because He is infinite love, and He still loved that Apostle who had rejected His graces, who was false to his vocation, and who had planned the greatest sin that the world has ever known; because He is infinitely patient and long-suffering, and defers His sentence until the time of judgment shall come. The sacrilege of Judas is repeated often throughout the world by others to whom He has given graces nearly as great as those granted to that wicked Apostle, but He permits these insults because He loves even sinners. Rather than punish them then, rather than consign them to the eternal torment which their sin deserves, our patient Lord in His ineffable love allows them to outrage even this adorable sacrament and to receive Him into their sinful souls by a sacrilegious Communion which imitates and almost equals the awful crime of Judas.

For All Mankind. The Holy Eucharist, that wondrous gift of our Saviour's love, was intended for us as well as for those who sat at table with Him. That sacrament and sacrifice are ours as well as theirs. Our Redeemer did not love His Apostles alone; He loves all men. He came to save all, to give His graces to all; and He invites all to the heavenly banquet of which the twelve partook at that first altar of our Catholic faith. They and their successors were commanded to continue through all future ages the miracle and mystery which He had wrought for them. "As often as ye shall do this, ye shall do it in commemoration of me." They were commissioned to take bread and wine, as He had done. They were empowered to utter the words which He had used. At the bidding of these men who had been chosen as priests of God, the bread and wine would cease to exist, and in their place, under their appearances, the sacred body and blood

of Christ would be present. For what purpose? That the priest might sanctify his own soul by receiving that divine food, and that he might nourish the souls of his fellow-men with the same heavenly banquet. That power and privilege were not reserved to the Apostles. Their successors were to continue that sacrifice and to administer that sacrament. Just as the Apostles were sent to preach the faith of Christ through all lands and all ages (which, obviously, could not be done by them alone, but required the labor of future generations), so they were commissioned by our blessed Saviour to offer that sacrifice and to bequeath the power of so doing to those who would follow them. And so, when the Apostles went forth on their mission of salvation, they did what their Master had done. On a table they placed bread and wine; over these they pronounced the sacred words which their Saviour had used; and thus began our holy Catholic Mass.

Through all the centuries that sacrifice has continued. In every age since our Church's birth, her children have been nourished with that heavenly food. The words of St. Paul show us not only that the faithful of apostolic times received Holy Communion, but that they had precisely the same belief as we of this distant day. "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (1 Cor. x. 16). "Whosoever shall eat of this bread or drink of the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. . . . For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29).

The Effects of Holy Communion. Let us now explain briefly the benefits that come to us when we partake of this august sacrament. We Catholics believe the words of our Saviour in their literal sense, that "This is my body, this is my blood." We believe that when we receive the Holy Eucharist we are not partaking of corporal food; that under the appearances of bread and wine is the living presence of Jesus Christ, His divinity and humanity, His whole sacred person. We believe that He enters

into our bodies, making them His tabernacles, and that by His coming our souls are marvelously sanctified by His grace, if they are worthy to receive Him.

The Holy Eucharist confers sanctifying grace by increasing that which is already in the soul. This it does in far greater measure than the other sacraments, because it is the receiving of the very author of grace. Its special effect is the giving of spiritual nourishment. Our Blessed Lord instituted it under the species of bread and wine to signify that it produces in our souls all the effects that material food produces in our bodies. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." When we take material food, it enters into and becomes a part of our bodily system. So is it in Holy Communion. Our loving Saviour unites Himself to us and becomes one with us. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him" (John vi. 57).

Bodily food preserves, restores and strengthens the powers of the body. So also the bread of life preserves and restores and strengthens the powers of the soul. It preserves us from mortal sin. "He that eateth of this bread shall never die." This it does by giving copious graces to the soul, by banishing the devil and his allurements, by diminishing concupiscence, and by making us sharers in the very life of Christ. "He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."

It restores and strengthens the soul by remitting venial sin, and by kindling in us the flame of charity which is love of God. It causes us to grow in grace, to become more and more perfect, until we attain our eternal destiny, the beatific vision of God. Well, then, does our Church call this sacrament "the pledge of future glory." Just as we now see God under the veil of the Eucharist, so hereafter we shall see Him in His sacred humanity, the risen and living body that died for us on Calvary, and in the glory of His divinity, the beholding of which will be our eternal reward.

This wondrous heavenly food has even an effect on our bodies. Indirectly, the body profits by the graces which are given to the soul. Inordinate appetites are lessened, and the body becomes what God intended it to be, an instrument of well-doing and a

source of merit for the soul that rules it. Theologians and spiritual writers teach us also that the body is made all the more worthy of a glorious resurrection from the fact that it has been a real and living tabernacle of Christ. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 55). The eternal glory of the body follows from the glory of the soul; and the soul wins its glory through sanctifying grace, which is most abundantly conferred through the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist.

Our Dispositions. That this sacrament may produce its effect in our souls, we must be properly disposed, worthy of being living temples of God.

What is it that makes us worthy? The state of sanctifying grace. The blessed Eucharist is the food of the soul, and presupposes spiritual life in him who receives it; for food cannot benefit the dead. Therefore, he alone is worthy who possesses the life of grace, who is free from mortal sin. Venial guilt does not bring about unworthiness or sacrilege, nor does it prevent the primary effect of the sacrament, which is the increasing of sanctifying grace, even though it may cause that grace to be given less abundantly.

Of course, when we use the word "worthy," we speak in a relative sense only. No creature can be really worthy to contain the Creator; above all, no soul that has ever been stained with sin can ever be worthy to receive the infinite majesty of God. But our Saviour overlooks our real unworthiness, and in His loving mercy He is pleased to come to any soul that has been restored to His grace and love.

Actual fervor is not strictly required for a worthy Communion, but the lack of it causes the loss of many graces, and causes God's blessings to be given less abundantly. The greater the devotion, the greater the grace. Fervent preparation is advisable, to bring us to a proper state of devotion for the reception of the Guest who honors us with His living presence. And while He remains corporally present in our mortal bodies we should be filled with an intensity of fervor that will exclude all distraction. Adora-

tion of our God, gratitude for all His mercies, sorrow for our sins, resolutions of future fidelity, prayers for our every need and for others as well as ourselves—such should be our thoughts and words in those precious moments after we have received our blessed Saviour in that sacrament which is well called the "Eucharist," the thanksgiving.

The Law of the Church. It is not necessary to do more than mention the Church's rules concerning Holy Communion. It must be received once a year; it should be received far more frequently than that. Ordinarily, we must be fasting; that is, the sacred body of our Lord is to be the first food of the day. In probable danger of death, the Holy Eucharist may be received as our Viaticum, our "food for a journey," without fasting. Those who have been for some time ill at home may receive Holy Communion there even though not strictly fasting (that is, after using water or other drink, a concession granted by that great apostle of frequent Communion, Pope Pius X); and in certain other contingencies the Blessed Sacrament may be lawfully received by one who is not fasting. These are rules made by the Church, manifesting her reverence for her Eucharistic Lord, and symbolizing the purity of soul that should be ours when we welcome our heavenly Guest in this sacrament of His love.

Chapter XXV

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

IN our Catholic Church we have a gift of God which manifests in a wonderful degree His infinite mercy. It is the sacrament through which He forgives the sins which are committed after Baptism has been received. When we were born into this world we were burdened with the guilt of original sin, inherited from our first parents. God removed this at our Baptism. He restored us to His love, infusing sanctifying grace into our souls. And even when thus forgiven, thus reunited to Him, we do not remain faithful. Our human understanding is clouded, our human will is weak; the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil are continually assailing us and, unfortunately, we go down to defeat only too easily.

God, who created us, knows well our frailty, and has compassion on it. He has given us a sacrament through which, on very easy terms, we can secure forgiveness, after Baptism, for sins, whether mortal or venial. It is well called, in the language of the Council of Trent, "the second plank after shipwreck." When disaster had come upon our race, the first plank, Baptism, was given to us that through it we might be rescued from eternal death, and we, ungrateful for God's mercy, plunge recklessly into the maelstrom from which we had been saved. Hence the need of the "second plank," the sacrament of Penance.

A Sacrament of Forgiveness. Baptism and Penance have both been given to us for the remission of sin, but there is a great difference between them; they are two distinct sacraments. Baptism is intended for the removing of original sin, and of any other sin that may be on the soul when it is received; Penance remits actual sins committed after Baptism. The first sacrament, if

worthily received, remits not only the guilt but the whole punishment; the second takes away the guilt and the eternal penalty, but usually leaves a temporary punishment which must be expiated here or hereafter.

The primary meaning of *penance* is pain or punishment, or reparation and expiation. All of these are included in the sacrament which bears that name. The virtue of penance is the disposition of one's soul which results in detestation of sin, the renouncing of evil and the satisfaction of God's justice; it is because this virtue or disposition is absolutely necessary for the remission of sin that this sacrament of mercy and pardon is called the sacrament of Penance.

Given by Our Lord. The institution of this sacrament is described most clearly in the twentieth chapter of St. John's Gospel. It took place after our Saviour's resurrection. He appeared to His Apostles and said to them: "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John xx. 21-23).

These are the words of the holy Gospel of Christ. They are to be found in the Protestant version as well as in ours. Our blessed Saviour gave that power to His Apostles in clear and unmistakable terms, and He never withdrew it. Is it not remarkable that our separated brethren can read these words in their Bible, and then persuade themselves that no such power exists?

They offer the objection that "God alone can forgive sin." The Jews of our Lord's day said the same when He cured the palsied man. And both Protestants and Jews are right; no one but God can forgive sin. But what hinders Him from delegating that power to another? Read carefully these words of St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 18-20): "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their sins; and he hath

placed in us the work of reconciling. For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us." This is the Apostle's line of argument: Christ is the reconciler, who has brought the world back to God by the redemption; and He has deputed to His ambassadors, His priests, this ministry and work of reconciliation.

A marvelous power! The priest who has inherited it from the Apostles is the ambassador of Christ. When he raises his hand in absolution, the soul that has been leprous with sin is cleansed from all defilement and is reconciled with its God, not by the priest himself, but by the great reconciler whose appointed agent he is because he is a successor of those to whom our merciful Saviour delegated His own power of forgiving sin.

The Testimony of the Church. All through her history the Catholic Church has exercised the power of absolving from sin. God gave it to the Apostles, but not for themselves alone. They handed it on, that sinners in all ages might have easy access to the tribunal of mercy. The stream of grace and forgiveness has never ceased to flow. In every century the priesthood of Christ's Church has used the power received from Him, of absolving the sins of that Church's children.

Well does St. John Chrysostom say that the power of that priesthood surpasses that of the priests of the Jewish law; for whereas these could attest the cure of bodily leprosy, the Christian priest has received power to cure the leprosy of the soul, not merely by declaring that the uncleanness is removed, but by actually removing it. St. Cyprian urges the sinner to repent "while confession may be made." St. Leo I says: "Very useful and necessary is it that the guilt of sin be loosed before the last day by the judgment of the priest" and so on. The Fathers of the Church, her pontiffs, her councils all give testimony to the same effect: that her priesthood possesses this power and has exercised it throughout all her history.

Suppose that no such practice existed in early times. How could it have been introduced later on? Any attempt to claim such power, to require the confession of sins, or to exercise the ministry

of the confessional would certainly have been regarded as an intolerable innovation. The testimony of the Fathers, both in the Western and Eastern Churches, is copious on this point. Here is a passage from St. Athanasius: "As the man whom the priest baptized is enlightened by the grace of the Holy Ghost, so he who in penance confesses his sins receives through the priest forgiveness in virtue of the grace of Christ."

The Matter and the Form. The fact that God gave this power, then, is the first essential of the sacrament of Penance, as it is of every other sacrament. As to what constitutes its real "matter," there is a controversy, into which we need not enter; but the opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas, confirmed by various councils, is that the acts of the penitent—namely, contrition, confession and satisfaction, are the "quasi-matter" of the sacrament, so called because they are unlike the tangible things (water, oil, etc.) which are the matter of some other sacraments.

The "form" of the sacrament, that is, the words of absolution used in conferring it, has varied in different ages and countries. In our Roman ritual these essential words are used: *Te absolvo* ("I absolve thee"), and the whole form pronounced by the confessor is made up of three parts: absolution from censure, if any has been incurred; absolution from sin, and a concluding prayer.

The Minister of the Sacrament. Who can exercise this ministry of forgiveness? A priest only, and he must possess a twofold power, *order* and *jurisdiction*. The former he gets by his ordination, the latter by the authority of the Church. He is a judge, but he can pass judgment only on those who are subject to his jurisdiction. Herein there is a great difference between the sacrament of Penance and the other sacraments. A priest, by virtue of his priesthood, can always consecrate the Holy Eucharist validly; but he cannot absolve validly unless he has received special jurisdiction, although at his ordination he received the power of forgiving sin. He must have "faculties," a permission given for the hearing of confessions in a certain territory, either permanently or for a time.

Contrition. For the forgiveness of sin certain conditions are

strictly required by God. We must be sorry for our sin; we must confess it, if confession be possible; we must make satisfaction for it.

The sorrow for sin must be what the Church calls contrition, a real, interior, supernatural sorrow that includes at least all our mortal sins, because through them we have offended God. If that sorrow comes from pure love of God and from no other motive, we call it perfect contrition. If it comes from some lower but still supernatural motive, such as horror of sin, fear of hell and desire of heaven, it is known as imperfect contrition. Sorrow that springs from mere worldly motives is not contrition at all, and has no value whatever in regard to the remission of sin.

Perfect contrition forgives sin entirely, even without confession or absolution, though there is an obligation of confessing afterwards if opportunity offers. Imperfect contrition, often called attrition, forgives sin also, but only when absolution is given in the sacrament of Penance. The sorrow required for forgiveness must be accompanied by an intention of avoiding future mortal sin and its occasions, which are the persons, places or things which, from their own nature or from our weakness, have been or may be causes of sin for us.

Confession. Why is it necessary for us to accuse ourselves of our sins? The answer is evident. The priest is not merely an absolver; he is, first of all, a judge—and how could a judge decide a case if he knew nothing about it? And the priest in the confessional is more than a judge; he is a teacher, a physician and a father.

As a teacher, he must correct false ideas and errors of conscience; this he cannot do unless he knows them. As a physician, he must cure the maladies of the soul; necessarily he must diagnose them correctly. He must be a true father, filled with tender love and sympathy, consoling, encouraging, advising, even rebuking; for this he must know the spiritual needs of his children.

Confession, the self-accusation of our sins, is necessary, then, when it can be made. "We are bound to confess our mortal sins; and it is well also to confess our venial sins," as the Catechism

tells us. Notice the distinction. Mortal sin is the "necessary matter" of confession; we are bound to confess every one that we remember, and the concealing of even one of these would make our confession worse than worthless. As for venial sins, they are the "free matter" of confession; we may omit or tell them as we choose, although we are urged to include them in our accusation.

Satisfaction. This is the reparation made to God and, if necessary, to man for the injury done by sin. It includes the performance of the "penance" given by the priest, and the restoring of our neighbor's goods or reputation if these have been injured. That we may obtain pardon we must be "in charity with all men," as far as possible, exercising the great Christian virtue of forgiveness. "If you will not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your offences" (Matt. vi. 14).

"The Unpardonable Sin." Any sin, no matter how great, may be forgiven, but only if we repent for it. What is meant, then, in the Gospel (Matt. xii. 32) by "the sin against the Holy Ghost," which "has no forgiveness either in this world or in the world to come"? This is the sin of *final impenitence,* the absolute and final rejection of God's grace, the despising of His mercy. It cannot be forgiven because the one great requisite of forgiveness is lacking, repentance. But any sin which we confess with supernatural sorrow can and will be forgiven in the sacrament of Penance.

The Confessional. What a help and comfort is sacramental confession! The greater our need, the deeper our sorrow, the more anxiously do we seek for one to whom we can open our hearts. We Catholics reveal our offences to one appointed by God to give us advice and warning and pardon, to one who is fitted by his office to judge our sins aright, to one who is bound by an inviolable bond of secrecy, to one from whom, by divine ordinance, we can obtain the forgiveness of any sin.

The telling of sins in confession is a practice that is distinctively Catholic, and one that has endured through all the ages of the Church's history. Saint Augustine (who died in the year 430) thus exhorts the sinner: "An abscess has formed in your conscience; it torments you and gives you no rest. . . . Confess,

and in confession let the pus come out and flow away." Origen, in the third century, speaks to the same effect: "Look around diligently for one to whom you should confess your sins," and "if we reveal our sins not only to God but also to those who can heal our sins and wounds, our crimes will be blotted out." Saint Basil declares: "It is necessary to confess our sins to those who are entrusted with the dispensing of the mysteries of God." Saint Leo the Great issued a decree advising the abolition of public confession and penance, "since it is enough that the guilt of conscience be manifested to the priests alone by secret confession." And the same Saint speaks of the telling of sins as "an apostolic rule." These are only a few of the ancient testimonies, which go back in an uninterrupted series to the latter part of the first century, to the years immediately following the days of the Apostles.

All through the Middle Ages the practice of confession prevailed throughout the Christian world. Numberless scholastic writers mentioned and explained it. Councils, both general and local, made decrees concerning it. Take, for example, the legislation of the Fourth Council of Lateran (1215). It did not "make a new article of faith," as Calvin and others declared, but simply decreed that every Christian, after arriving at years of discretion, must obey the precept of confession at least once a year, thus presupposing the existence and the necessity of the Catholic practice of confession.

Here are some instructive words from the great Saint Thomas Aquinas: "The institution of confession was necessary in order that the sin of the penitent might be revealed to Christ's minister. His office requires two things, the authority of knowledge, and the power to absolve or condemn." Now what the Saint so fittingly calls "the authority of knowledge" can only be obtained by the self-accusation of the penitent.

Moreover, we can see that the practice of confession prevailed in early times from the fact that it is found to-day in the schismatic Churches, in Eastern rites that are long separated from Catholic unity. It was a Catholic practice when they withdrew from the

Church, and they took it with them, and have preserved and continued it to the present day. When, led by erring guides, these flocks wandered away from the fold of Christ, they nevertheless retained nearly all the dogmas of Catholicism and the practices which then prevailed in the Christian world. They kept the Mass, the sacraments, the priestly office and many other essentials; and the necessity of confessing sin is a doctrine of their faith just as it is of ours.

A Religion of Protest. Then came Protestantism, a multiplicity of sects, holding various and contradictory opinions about nearly everything that the Catholic Church had taught. They rejected confession at the very outset of their career. "The sinner should tell his sins only to God, for God alone can forgive him." The last half of this declaration is perfectly true: God alone can forgive the sinner; but the first half is false. How well did St. Augustine show the fallacy of that very argument! and remember, dear reader, that the illustrious Saint lived 1,200 years before there was a Protestant in the world. "Let no one say: 'I do penance secretly, I perform it in the sight of God; and He who is to pardon me knows that in my heart I repent.' . . . Was it then said to no purpose, 'Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven'? Was it for nothing that the keys were given to the Church?"

The new religion which Luther and Calvin bestowed upon the world was truly "a religion of protest," whence it gets its self-chosen name of Protestantism. It "protested against" and discarded a large part of the ancient Catholic faith and nearly the whole of Catholic practices. The Church from which the "reformers" withdrew had always used seven sacraments; they reduced the number to two. That Church, through all her history, had required her children to confess their sins to a priest, a difficult and distasteful task, indeed; and these new sects would have none of it. They kept the Bible, and made it their sole rule of faith, to be interpreted by each individual according to his judgment or whim; but they seem unanimously to have overlooked these words which are in their version of the Scriptures as well

as in ours: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Not content with rejecting this salutary practice of confession, they have been ceaselessly engaged in misrepresenting its true nature and the manner in which the Catholic Church has made use of it for nineteen centuries.

Writers and preachers who are presumably learned are prone to show a degree of ignorance which is astounding whenever they discuss the "Romish" practice of confession. Their misrepresentations are so glaring that they would seem to be intentional and malicious. As for the rank and file of non-Catholics, the extent of their misinformation is appalling. Four centuries of oft-repeated falsehood have brought about an almost universal misunderstanding of the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church regarding the forgiveness of sin, and have resulted in a ceaseless and violent campaign of slander against her priests.

It seems almost useless to attempt to refute the preposterous charges of the average non-Catholic teacher when he turns his attention to the evils of "Popery." It has been done thousands of times, and the assertions reappear as if they had never been and never could be refuted. The explanation of the Catholic viewpoint is either not seen or not believed by the ignorant or malicious enemies of our Church.

Her doctrines and practices and the reasons therefor are no sealed book. The truth concerning them may be easily ascertained. It seems incredible that the statements made about confession can be believed by any person of ordinary sense or intelligence. However, the gullible always outnumber the sensible, and none are so gullible as the ignorant. Holy Writ tells us of the infinite number of fools, and an American cynic asserts that "one is born every minute."

The Voice of the Bigot. Let us take up some samples of these statements. Their very absurdity makes them somewhat interesting.

"You Catholics believe that, to be forgiven, you need merely

to tell your sins to a priest." Most emphatically, we do *not*. Our Church does not teach it, and has never taught it. The accusation of sins is necessary in most cases, indeed, but it is by no means essential to the sacrament of Penance. There is something far more important, far more necessary, something without which there can be no sacrament and no forgiveness; namely, *contrition,* or supernatural sorrow for sin, with its necessary consequence, a firm purpose of amendment. Mortal sin may be forgiven without confession. It can never be forgiven without contrition.

"Priests give (or have sometimes given) a license or permission to commit sin." An ancient and slanderous absurdity. No confessor ever gave such a license or permission. The ministry of confession is intended for the good of souls, to sanctify them, to blot out the sins of the penitent, to impart grace to him, to strengthen him against future falls. The advice, reproof, warning or encouragement given by the priest are potent aids in bringing about amendment of life. Many well-informed non-Catholics, who know nothing of the supernatural effects of the sacrament of Penance, are well aware of its good results, and bear willing testimony to its value in promoting purity, honesty and respect for divine and civil laws.

"The pardon of sins must be paid for, according to their gravity; and any sin will be forgiven if the sinner pays enough." This antique and ridiculous slander is revived now and then, especially by the sensational anti-Catholic type of preacher. It hardly merits an answer. No Catholic ever paid money to a priest for forgiveness. Many a Catholic has been compelled to restore ill-gotten gains because absolution was withheld until restoration was made. Many a Catholic has given generously to charity because a penance of almsdeeds was imposed upon him in confession. But not a penny was ever paid for pardon. The selling of absolution, far from being a Catholic practice, would be a grievous crime according to Catholic moral law—the sin of simony, the sale of a holy thing for gain—and would partake of the nature of a sacrilege.

"Bad Priests." "But if a priest is a wicked man, does not the

confessional give him ample opportunity for vice?" Not so much as one might think.

Undoubtedly there are unworthy priests; not many, thank God! There was one bad Apostle among the twelve; there is not one bad priest among a hundred. A young man who enters the priesthood makes a great sacrifice, in fact, many sacrifices. He gives up the right to family ties and lawful worldly pleasures, and he receives a very moderate worldly recompense. He enters on a life which calls for considerable self-denial. Why does he do so? Because he feels that such a life is his vocation, that he is called to it by God. He may fall; he may become a hypocrite; but even then, the Church has safeguarded the confessional and the penitent against him. No priest could absolve one who has been his accomplice in impurity; if he should attempt to do so, he would thereby commit a crime which is reserved "in a most special manner" to the Pope himself, which means that no confessor could give absolution to that wicked priest until the case had been referred to the Holy See and suitable penalties imposed.

Suppose, again, that a sinful priest attempted to use the confessional for evil purposes, to lead another into sin. The person whom he tried to tempt could not be absolved by any other priest until the name and the guilt of the unworthy confessor had been revealed to the bishop of the diocese. And the said person would be excommunicated if the accusation were not made promptly. Such are the wise laws of the Catholic Church, devised to conserve the sanctity of the confessional.

"Priestcraft." Neither is there any truth in the statement that through the confessional priests secure a harmful domination over those who come to them. The average priest finds the hearing of confessions the most monotonous and at the same time the most comforting part of his labors. He has no desire to remember the sins he hears. He has no time for curiosity. His work would be a drudgery were it not for the consciousness which every confessor has that he is doing God's work, that he is accomplishing more good than he could do anywhere else. In the long hours spent in the confessional he can give comfort to the sorrowing,

can send the sinner away purified from every stain, can guide the earnest soul to loftier heights of perfection; and oftentimes, good priest though he be, he has to confess himself far inferior in sanctity to some who come to him for absolution.

The Seal of Confession. This is another safeguard to sanctity of the sacrament of Penance. Every Catholic knows, and many non-Catholics know as well, that a priest is not permitted under any circumstances or for any reason whatever to reveal what he has heard in confession.

In the tribunal of penance the confessor is not acting as a mere man. He sits there as a judge commissioned by God. He is never allowed to disclose to any one the matters submitted to him in that tribunal. This law admits of absolutely no exception. Unless the penitent freely gives the confessor leave to use his knowledge, the priest must not by word or look or gesture reveal sins or weaknesses, or the names or sins of accomplices, or anything that would bring discredit or contempt or trouble on the penitent. If harm would thereby ensue, he must not even admit that a certain person has confessed to him. He is never allowed by change of conduct or manner to remind the penitent of anything that has been told in confession.

The violation of this law in any way would be a detestable sacrilege, and would entail the severest penalties for the guilty priest. And it is right that this should be so; for any revealing of matters of confession would make the sacrament of Penance an intolerable abuse instead of a ministry of mercy and reconciliation.

A Secret Sacrament. The sacrament of Penance is the only one that is always administered in secret. The other sacraments are given ordinarily in a solemn and public manner, in the presence of witnesses, with lights and prayers. The sacrament of Penance is a private affair. It concerns none but the penitent and the priest; hence it is secretly administered, usually in the narrow confines of the confessional, and always without pomp or ceremony.

Every Catholic is familiar from childhood with the requirements for a worthy confession, and every Catholic knows also, from

his own experience, the peace and heavenly comfort that have filled his soul when he rose from his knees after absolution and went forth "with God's benediction upon him." The confession of our sins may seem hard, but, in reality, God has made the work of reconciliation easy for us. Earnest sorrow, a real purpose of amendment, a sincere confession—and the sins, be they great or small, many or few, cease to exist. They are blotted out forever. They are judged in the tribunal of mercy, and they will never be judged again in time or eternity. They must be told, and the telling is hard; but it is not made to the world at large. They are whispered only to one man whom God has chosen to hear them, and who is bound by a most sacred obligation, bound by his own hope of heaven, to preserve everlasting silence.

Chapter XXVI

INDULGENCES

THE matter of indulgences is not, strictly speaking, a fundamental of our Catholic faith; but it is based upon something which is truly a fundamental, the "power of the keys," the power to bind and to loose, which was given by the divine founder of our Church to her first Pontiff and to his successors. That power was given primarily for the forgiving of sins, but it may be exercised also in the remitting of a certain penalty which we call "temporal punishment," and which may be due to sin when the guilt thereof has been forgiven and the eternal punishment has been cancelled. And this exercise of that merciful and God-given power is what we call an indulgence.

As this is a point of Catholic doctrine and practice that is almost universally misunderstood and misrepresented, it may be well to give it a chapter for itself.

When the Catholic Church recommends certain devotions to her children, she often enriches them with spiritual favors which are called indulgences. We read in our prayer-books that this or that pious practice or prayer procures an indulgence of so many days or years, or in some cases a complete or plenary indulgence; and many Catholics, perhaps otherwise well informed, fulfill the prescribed conditions and gain the indulgence without having a very clear idea of what they are gaining.

"Historical" Absurdities. There is no Catholic teaching that has been so persistently and systematically misrepresented by non-Catholics. Almost every work which professes to treat of the causes and conditions which led up to the so-called "Reformation" is full of inaccuracies in this matter, and usually assails it with considerable vehemence. We read in "standard" and widely

advertised encyclopedias and in histories enjoying great and often undeserved repute, that in the sixteenth century papal decrees were issued which granted "a full forgiveness of sin" to those who paid for it, and especially to those who contributed liberally to the building of St. Peter's Church in Rome. We read that the zealous and whole-souled Luther, righteously indignant at such abuses, rose in his might and "protested" against them so forcibly and effectively that Protestantism resulted from his glorious efforts. Here and there we find the preposterous statement that the indulgences granted by Leo X were nothing less than a license to commit sin, a pardon not only for past crimes but for future ones as well. Such are some samples of the charges persistently set forth by our Church's enemies concerning this matter of indulgences; and there is not a word of truth in any of them.

Not a Pardon. Let us state briefly what an indulgence is—and it may be well to mention first what an indulgence is not. It is not a forgiving of sins already committed. It is not a license or permission to commit sin, nor a pardon of sins that may be committed in the future. It is not a pardon of sin at all. And it can never be gained if there is mortal sin on the soul.

An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment which is often due to sin after its guilt has been taken away through the sacrament of Penance. This remission is effected when the Church applies to the soul of the forgiven sinner the "treasury of merit" which she possesses and dispenses to those who need it.

When a definition brings before us some new terms, it is well that these shall be accurately stated and clearly understood. The matter which we are considering is somewhat abstruse; misunderstanding is easy; therefore we shall explain it in some detail.

An indulgence never forgives sin. God has provided another means, the sacrament of Penance, to take away the guilt and the eternal punishment of sins committed after Baptism; and that sacrament cannot be of any avail unless the soul that seeks forgiveness has sincere and supernatural sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment.

Before an indulgence can be gained, the guilt of mortal sin

must be washed away and the eternal penalty which it deserved must be cancelled. Until that is done, there can be no question or possibility of gaining an indulgence.

The Church cannot give, by an indulgence or in any other way, a permission for future sins. The very thought of any such license is blasphemous, hideous and abominable. The Church is a teacher of truth and holiness, a guide in the path of virtue, helping man towards heaven. She strives to overcome evil, to cleanse souls from sin, and to inculcate virtue; and if she countenanced or permitted vice in any form she would be an agent of Satan and not of Christ, a corrupter instead of a sanctifier of mankind.

We see, then, that an indulgence is not a pardon of sin nor a license to commit sin, nor an encouragement to sin in any way. On the contrary, it is a very salutary aid to the soul of man, as we shall explain further on, and presupposes the state of grace, which is freedom from mortal sin.

Temporal Punishment. "An indulgence is the remission, in whole or in part, of the temporal punishment due to sin." What does this mean? What does an indulgence remit?

The teaching of our faith is that when, through the sacrament of Penance, our sins have been pardoned by God, when their guilt has been washed away and the eternal punishment which they deserved has been remitted, a temporal penalty often remains.

If sin has been forgiven through the sacrament of *Baptism,* the above is not true. That sacrament annuls the guilt and the penalty entirely. But the forgiveness imparted in the sacrament of Penance is usually less effective, less complete. It takes away, indeed, the guilt of mortal sin, and consequently there is no longer any possibility of eternal punishment for that forgiven sin; but there may remain a temporary penalty which (unless it be remitted) must be expiated before heaven can be gained. It may be "worked out" wholly or partially in this world, by penances, devotions, almsdeeds and other good works. But if it remains on the soul at death it necessitates a stay in purgatory. How long this will be in any particular case, we do not know.

The Church of God has the power of remitting this temporal punishment through indulgences. This she may do while we are living in this world, by permitting us to gain these indulgences for ourselves, or she may help us after this life is over, when our own time of meriting is past, by applying to our souls the indulgences that are gained by others who are living here on earth. When a soul is sentenced by God's justice to purgatorial fires, that soul is still a member of the Church of God, and can still share in the benefits of her daily sacrifice, in the prayers and good works of her other members, and in the indulgences which her bounty has provided for the living and the dead.

The Treasury of Merit. How can the Church do this? How can she remit the temporal punishment of the souls that are in this world, and even of those that are suffering in purgatory? Because she has access to the mighty spiritual treasure stored up by our blessed Saviour and His saints. The merits of our Lord's sufferings and death were, of course, sufficient to satisfy for all guilt and all penalty due to sin; and His Church dispenses them to us through the sacraments and through indulgences. Our Mother Mary lived a life of perfect holiness; she had no sins to atone for, and so she did not need the abundant merits which she gained; and the Church enables us to acquire the benefit of them through indulgences. Many of the saints won far more merit than they needed for their own salvation; this is true not only in the case of the great and famous ones, but of the "great multitude which no man can number," concerning whose names or histories we know nothing. Now these merits have not ceased to exist. They are not lost, nor are they useless. They are preserved, as it were, in a mighty "treasury of merit," and the Church can draw on this for those who need it, just as if, in some Utopia, all the surplus wealth of the prosperous citizens were set apart for the poor and needy, and were portioned out to them according to their necessities.

Two Kinds. An indulgence may be either plenary or partial. The first remits all the temporal punishment; the latter takes away only a part of it. For the gaining of a plenary indulgence

it is necessary that it be proclaimed by the Church, and that certain conditions be fulfilled, one of these being the detestation of all sin, including even that which is venial, and a firm purpose of avoiding sin of any degree. Each separate indulgence has its own conditions, prescribed by the Church and, usually, we cannot be absolutely certain that we have complied thoroughly with all the requirements, or that we have gained an indulgence that is really plenary.

The Giver. Who can grant indulgences? The Catholic Church only. This power is included in her commission "to bind and to loose." The principal legislative office in the Church, the centre of her authority, is the Holy See, the Papacy, and to it primarily belongs the power of granting indulgences. Plenary indulgences are usually decreed by the Pope alone, though he may permit others to impart them. Cardinals, certain Roman Congregations, papal delegates, primates, archbishops and bishops in charge of a diocese have a restricted power of granting partial indulgences.

The Receiver. A person who desires to gain any indulgence must, of course, be a member of the Church. He must perform the work enjoined exactly as it is prescribed. He must be in the state of grace at least before he finishes that work. For the gaining of plenary indulgences the Church insists, in most cases, on confession, Holy Communion and a prayer for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff. The nature and amount of this prayer are usually not specified, but five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys are often used and are deemed sufficient.

The History of Indulgences. The present teaching and practice of our Church concerning indulgences is an evolution extending through nineteen centuries. In early times her discipline towards sinners was very severe. Heavy penalties, known as "canonical penances," were exacted for grave sins; but if the sinner manifested extraordinary signs of contrition, these penalties were shortened and lessened in severity. This was true especially when persecution was going on. It frequently happened in those days that thousands of Christians were in prison, suffering much

and awaiting death. Their martyrdom was sure to effect their eternal salvation; consequently they did not need the great merits which they were acquiring. They often wrote to the Pope or bishops a "letter of peace," offering their merits and sufferings as a substitute for the canonical penances inflicted on other Christians who were being disciplined for sins. Their intercession secured the remission of these penalties; the sinner was not only restored to full membership in the Church, but received also exemption from temporal punishment in the sight of God, either partially or wholly, according to the divine will.

Later on, the law of canonical penances became less rigorous; the Church often allowed some lesser work to take the place of severe penalties. Almsgiving, pilgrimages, and even short prayers were permitted instead of many days or even years of canonical penance. Hence we find the terms "an indulgence of forty days," "of seven years," etc., which do not imply, as some might think, that thereby we take away forty days or seven years of purgatory for ourselves or others, but that, on account of the treasury of merit in which we share, we get as much benefit and make as much reparation for ourselves or for a soul in purgatory as we should if we performed the severe canonical penances of ancient times for forty days or seven years.

For the Souls. How is it that the Church possesses power to grant indulgences in favor of the souls in purgatory? These souls are no longer subjects of the Church on earth; how, then, can she legislate in their favor? The answer is not difficult. She has no actual power over these souls. She cannot help them directly. She only entreats God to accept the superabundant merits of Christ and His saints and to dispense them for the entire or partial relief of His servants who are suffering. She leaves the distribution of these merits to God, praying and trusting that in His infinite mercy He will give them to His friends who need them.

This beautiful doctrine and practice of our Church shows us the loving maternal spirit which animates her. We have sinned, and even when God has forgiven us we may still have reparation

to make and a penalty to pay. But the Church wishes to make our penalty small; she can do so because we are members of a great spiritual society which has been heaping up a vast treasure of merit for nearly two thousand years, and which has access, also, to the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. We are a part of the great corporation which controls that treasure; and as we are needy, as we ourselves deserve little from God's hands except punishment, the Church gives us a share in this mighty store of merit and permits us to use it, if we wish, for our loved ones who are in purgatorial fire. And when our earthly life is at an end she continues to help us. In answer to her supplications God will lessen or totally remit our temporal penalties through indulgences gained for us by those who are still in this world and still capable of gaining merit.

Chapter XXVII

EXTREME UNCTION

THE love and mercy of God are wonderfully manifested in the provision which He has made for imparting graces to us at the very times when they are most needed. Baptism is the God-given remedy for the original sin which burdened our souls when we came into this world; through it we become worthy "Christians, children of God and heirs of heaven." Confirmation, usually received at an age when the allurements of the world are beginning to exercise their baleful influence, strengthens and safeguards us against them, and makes us brave and loyal "soldiers of Jesus Christ." Penance is the tribunal of mercy, in which our sins are judged and pardoned. The Holy Eucharist is "the living bread that came down from heaven," the food of our souls, the pledge of everlasting life. Holy Orders give grace and power to those who are to be priests of God and teachers of His truth. And Matrimony imparts graces and blessings to the man and woman who are entering on a life-long union.

There will be another time in the life of every one of us when special graces will be sorely needed. The day will come when God will call us out of this world to render an account of our stewardship, to appear before Him for judgment, to hear our sentence of weal or woe, to enter on an eternity of bliss or of torment. To help us in this hour, the very crisis of our existence, our blessed Saviour has provided a sacrament which strengthens and consoles, which prepares the soul for its passage into eternity. This sacrament is Extreme Unction.

The Name of the Sacrament. Why is it so called? "Extreme Unction" signifies "the last anointing," and is used as the name of this sacrament because other anointings have been previously

administered to the Catholic Christian as sacraments or as sacramental rites. When he received Baptism, symbolic unctions were made with holy oils; at Confirmation the sacrament was administered by an anointing with chrism; and if the sacrament of Holy Orders has been received by him, the palms of his hands were sanctified by another unction. So the sacrament which is conferred with holy oil when death is drawing near is well called the Extreme Unction. The other anointings have given or symbolized graces and strength and blessing; but there is no time in our lives when we need them so urgently as when we stand on the threshold of eternity, when time is drawing to a close, when we, sinners as we are, are about to appear before Him against whom we have sinned, and to receive our sentence at the dread tribunal of God.

A Real Sacrament. "Extreme Unction is a sacrament which, through the anointing and prayer of the priest, gives health and strength to the soul, and sometimes to the body, when we are in danger of death from sickness." Such is the definition given in the Catechism. Let us examine and analyze it.

We say that Extreme Unction is a sacrament. How do we know this? As we have seen, a sacrament must be "an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace." Here we have three requirements. Was Extreme Unction instituted by Christ? Undoubtedly, although there is no mention of that fact in the Gospels. But in the writings of one of His Apostles, in the Epistle of St. James (v. 14, 15) we find these words: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Here we have an unmistakable "outward sign," the use of oil for anointing, together with a "prayer of faith." This sign gives grace, for thereby "the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Whence does this anointing receive this power of imparting grace to the sick man's soul? No

one but God can give it. Neither the Apostles nor the Church could establish a sign that would confer grace on man's soul. Therefore we see clearly that this sacrament must have been instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, even though the Gospel narrative does not record the time or the occasion. Extreme Unction, then, is a real sacrament, because it possesses the three requisite qualities of a sacrament.

Its History. Despite the clear teaching of St. James, which recommended this sacrament to all Christians without distinction of time or place, little is known of its use in the earlier centuries. We find few references to it in the days of persecution, doubtless because its administration was then a matter of serious difficulty. Some of the Church's early writers looked upon it as a sort of complement to the sacrament of Penance. Pope Innocent I seems to have been the first to list it as a distinct sacrament. But there is abundant testimony in later centuries from Councils and theologians and ritual decisions. The practice of the Church has varied considerably at different periods as to the rules for administering it, as we shall see further on.

When the great revolt against the Church took place, the so-called "Reformation," this sacrament was discarded by the "reformers." Luther would have none of it. In fact, he condemned the Epistle of St. James as "an epistle of straw," because it taught that "faith without works is dead," which was a direct contradiction of Luther's own teaching that "faith alone will save us." And so the Protestant Churches have deprived themselves of this consoling sacrament; they have no Extreme Unction. They take the Holy Scriptures, including this Epistle of St. James, as their sole rule of faith, and then they pay no attention whatever to the sacrament which St. James describes.

The Matter and the Form. Extreme Unction gives grace "through the anointing and prayer of the priest," says the Catechism, thus expressing the nature of the outward sign. The anointing is made with the oil of the sick, which is olive oil blessed ordinarily by a bishop. A priest, in certain cases, may receive

permission to bless it, and in the Greek rite this is commonly done, with the express approbation of the Holy See.

The anointings are made, according to our Roman ritual, in the form of a cross on the parts of the body which are respectively the seat or symbol of the five senses, through which sin may have come upon the soul: the eyes, for sight; the ears, for hearing; the nostrils, for smell; the lips, for taste and also for speech; the hands, for the sense of touch; and the feet, for sins committed by walking. Formerly an additional unction was made on the loins (in the case of males only) to signify the remission of guilt caused by carnal desire, but this is seldom used at the present day.

In some parts of the world, in ancient times, it was customary to repeat the anointings on seven successive days, but our ritual of to-day retains no vestige of this practice.

The words that accompany the anointings are, in our rite, as follows: "Through this holy unction and through His most tender mercy may the Lord pardon thee whatever thou hast sinned by sight," or "by hearing," etc., according to the sense that is receiving the unction. We see that this form of words is in the nature of a prayer, fulfilling the direction given by St. James that the priest shall "pray over" the sick man. A prayer-form is used also in the Greek rite, as follows: "Holy Father, physician of souls and bodies, heal this Thy servant from that infirmity of body and soul which possesses him." Thus it is clear that, for validity, no precise formula is required; the unction must be given "in the name of the Lord," with words indicating the grace conferred.

Extreme Unction is always given by a priest. St. James so prescribed, in the passage quoted; and such has been the uniform practice of the Church. In ancient times the Apostle's words were complied with even more literally; it was customary to have several priests who jointly administered the sacrament. This is still done in some Eastern rites, where seven priests, or at least three, usually share in the giving of Extreme Unction.

A Sacrament for the Sick. Extreme Unction is given only to those who are "in danger of death from sickness." It is not

intended for persons who are not seriously ill, nor for those who are in danger of death from other causes. For example, it could not be administered to a man in good health who is sentenced to death, nor to one who is going into battle or other occasion of extreme danger where he may lose his life. A wounded man who is in danger of death should receive it, for his condition is a kind of sickness resulting from his wound.

It is for the sick who have sinned after Baptism, not for infants, nor for those who have never had the use of reason and have thus been incapable of sinning.

How frequently may it be received? The opinion was held by some early theologians that it could be received only once in a lifetime; but the Council of Trent gives us the present law of the Church, that it may be received whenever we are in danger of death from sickness; that is, if we recover and afterwards fall into a new danger the sacrament is to be administered again.

The Effect of the Sacrament. Extreme Unction is a "sacrament of the living." It presupposes the state of grace, if it is to be received worthily. It is not directly intended for the pardoning of mortal sins, though it remits such sins when they are unknown and have not been remitted in any other way, provided, of course, that the sick person be truly penitent.

Extreme Unction cleanses the soul from venial sin which has not been otherwise pardoned. It takes away "the remains of sin," that is, any guilt existing in the soul but not known as such (for example, when a sin remains because the absolution was invalid), the evil dispositions and tendencies left in the soul by forgiven sin, or the temporal punishment which our sins deserve. Extreme Unction takes these away either wholly or in part, according to the dispositions of him who receives it.

It increases sanctifying grace. It gives sacramental grace, which is a right to the actual graces which will aid the sick man in enduring patiently his sufferings and in resisting the temptations which may beset him in his last moments. And, when God so wills it, this sacrament benefits the body as well as the soul. "The

prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up."

For this last reason especially, this sacrament should be received as soon as danger of death is apparent; it should not be deferred until death is drawing near. The effects of Extreme Unction on the body may take place in either of two ways: by a direct miracle, which is always possible, indeed, but not probable; and in an indirect and natural way, by soothing the soul, lessening the fear of death, and causing such peace of mind that restoration to health often follows as a natural consequence. Now, if the sacrament is to act thus, as a natural remedy, it must be received in due time, early in the illness; for otherwise, like other remedies applied too late, it will not produce its effect.

This, then, is the sacrament of consolation and strength which God has given to us Catholics for the imparting of great and special graces when we need them most. Every priest can tell of its effects, how it gives to the dying Christian wonderful peace of mind, resignation to the will of God, courage to face the judgment that awaits him, firm trust in God's mercy, and confident hope of a blessed eternity. And often, after receiving this sacrament, the sick man whose case seemed hopeless, whose hours were apparently numbered, has been brought back from the very gates of death and restored to health and vigor.

The Apostolic Blessing. There is a very beautiful and salutary rite which usually follows the administration of Extreme Unction. It is the giving of the "Apostolic Benediction," which confers a plenary indulgence *in articulo mortis* (at the moment of death).

This Benediction is the special blessing of our Holy Father the Pope to each of his children who is about to die. Every priest is empowered to administer it. The blessing and the indulgence which accompanies it are given by the Sovereign Pontiff, who is the only one who can impart a plenary indulgence; the priest is simply his authorized agent. And so the Catholic whose soul is going forth on "the great adventure," whose body lies on its death-bed, truly receives the consolations of the religion of Christ.

By the sacrament of Penance his sins are forgiven; his soul is nourished by "the food for a journey," the holy Viaticum; the oil of the sick cleanses him from venial guilt and from the remains of sin; and then the loving benediction of the vicar of Christ is imparted to him, bringing an indulgence which operates not when the blessing is pronounced, but at the very moment when his soul is passing into the presence of its Judge. That indulgence, remember, is plenary; that is, if the necessary conditions are fulfilled, it takes away all temporal punishment.

And if this be so, if in your case, dear reader, or in mine, at the moment of death, all the punishment of purgatory be taken away by that plenary indulgence granted by the head of our Church, what will be the result? No expiation, no suffering, no "hope deferred," no postponement of our reward. Our souls will be free from every stain, pure and holy in God's sight, objects of His love, with no defilement that would hinder our union with Him, and even though we have been far from deserving a reward, we shall hear the sentence which He reserves for His faithful servants: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Thus does God in His loving mercy, through the ministry of our holy mother, the Church, give us abundant grace in our greatest need. Thus are we strengthened and prepared for our passage to another life, and for the ordeal which each of us must undergo, our judgment and our sentence before the dread tribunal of God.

Chapter XXVIII

HOLY ORDERS

GOD wishes to be worshiped by His creatures. He has created and redeemed us, and He requires from us an external expression of worship, in the form of prayer and sacrifice.

Every man can and must pray to God; but not to every man has He given the power of offering sacrifice. This is reserved to certain chosen ones, the priests of His Church; and to them this power is given by the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The Greatest Sacrifice. The central act of Catholic worship is the great sacrifice which commemorates and continues the atoning sacrifice of Calvary. Let us quote again the words of the prophet Malachias: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 10, 11).

How wonderfully and perfectly this prophecy has been fulfilled! Go into a Catholic church, anywhere in the world, not only on a Sunday, but on any morning of the year. There, at a table which we call an altar, stands a man clad in strange and symbolic garb. With solemn ceremonies and reverent mien he obeys the command which the Saviour gave at the Last Supper: "As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in commemoration of me." That man is a successor of the Apostles to whom that command was given. He is a priest of God, as they were. And through his ministry, though he is but a creature of God, the great sacrifice which Jesus offered for our redemption is daily renewed; at his bidding the incarnate Son of God comes down from His

heavenly throne to be touched by human hands, to enter into human bodies and souls, to "be with us all days," that we may be able to adore Him in His bodily presence and receive Him as the food of our souls.

"The Giver of Holy Things." The gifts and graces which God bestows come to mankind largely through the ministry of the priest. What is a "priest"? This English word of ours is somewhat inadequate; it fails to express the sublimity and dignity of the sacerdotal office. It is contracted from the Greek word *presbuteros,* meaning simply "an elder." The elders among the Jews were the chief men in the various communities, who formed a council, met in the synagogues, and administered local discipline. But a Catholic priest is far more than a councillor or a governor. He is a dispenser of the mysteries of God, a messenger of His tidings, an offerer of a daily and acceptable sacrifice, a judge and pardoner of sins; and for the fulfilling of all these duties he is chosen and called and ordained by God. Hence the Latin name for a priest, *sacerdos,* is far more appropriate for expressing his sublime office and duties than our English word *priest;* for the *sacerdos* is "the giver of holy things."

Shadow and Reality. In the ancient worship of the Jewish people during the centuries before the coming of the Messias, there was a priesthood, a body of men empowered to offer the imperfect sacrifices of that law. Their office foreshadowed the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ and the sacrament by which He gave to His Church the power of offering the one true sacrifice of the New Law. The blood of oxen and sheep was poured out on the altars of the Jewish faith; but the "clean oblation" of which Malachias spoke is something infinitely superior to these figurative immolations. It is offered by the Christian priest acting as the minister and representative of Christ; and no other sacrifice can be really acceptable to the infinite majesty of God. The priest who offers it is, as it were, the agent of Him who is at the same time priest and victim. "Through him therefore we offer always to God a victim of praise, that is, the fruit of lips confessing his name" (Heb. xiii. 15).

In the Catholic Church there is a real priesthood. She has the right and power, given by her divine founder, to choose and set apart and ordain certain men who are thereby empowered to offer the sacrifice of the New Law, which is the Holy Mass, to forgive sins, and to instruct and rule the other members of Christ's earthly kingdom. By the sacrament of Holy Orders "bishops, priests and other ministers of the Church are ordained, and receive power and grace to perform their sacred duties."

The word *order* has many meanings; but the Latin *ordo,* from which it is derived, signifies "rank," especially "eminent rank," and sometimes "magistracy." Holy Orders, then, is the rank which places a man over others in holy things, which makes him the custodian of God's truth, the messenger of His word and the dispenser of His mysteries.

The Powers of the Priesthood. "Bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church"—such are the words of the definition. Let us first consider the priesthood. What are the "sacred duties" of a priest? They are well expressed in the words of a bishop at an ordination, "to offer, to bless, to rule, to preach, to baptize." He is "to offer" the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, to hold in his consecrated hands the living body of Christ. He is "to bless," to give God's benediction to any one or anything. He is "to rule," for he will be placed in authority over a part of the flock of Christ. He is "to preach," to be God's spokesman, appointed to teach His word "in season and out of season," commissioned as an evangelist, a "bringer of good tidings." He is "to baptize," for he is the ordinary minister of the sacrament by which souls are brought into the fold of Christ. And he is to administer other sacraments as well. He, a man and a sinner, is commissioned by God to judge and pardon the sins of other men.

Successors of the Apostles. The episcopate, the rank of bishop, is the completion and perfection of the sacrament of Holy Orders. A bishop is a direct successor of the Apostles of Christ, possessing all the powers which our blessed Saviour gave to them. At his consecration he receives sacramental grace and power to propagate the sacred orders of the hierarchy, to bless certain things,

and to administer the sacrament of Confirmation. He is ordinarily the *episcopus;* that is, the "overseer" of a diocese, the shepherd of a flock; and he obtains his jurisdiction from the chief pastor of the universal Church.

Who are the "other ministers of the Church" mentioned above in the definition of the sacrament of Holy Orders? Not the Cardinals; these are not ordained to that rank and dignity, but receive it through appointment by the Sovereign Pontiff. Not the Pope himself; he needs no ordination or consecration to make him Pope; he is elected to that office, and if he were not a priest or bishop previous to his election he would nevertheless be Pope, needing, however, subsequent ordination to the priesthood or consecration to the episcopate. The "other ministers of the Church" are those who have received orders lower than that of priesthood; for a candidate to the sacred ministry passes through several steps before the priestly character is conferred upon him.

It will not be necessary to dwell here on the offices and duties of these lower ranks of the clergy, as they have been sufficiently explained in *The Externals of the Catholic Church.*

A Real Sacrament. Holy Orders is a true sacrament of the New Law. As we have seen, a sacrament must have three qualities. It must be an outward sign; this sign must give supernatural grace to the soul of man; and it can only possess this efficacy because our Blessed Lord has so ordained. St. Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy, exhorting him to be faithful to his priestly office: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which has been given to thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the priesthood" (1 Tim. iv. 14); "I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands" (2 Tim. i. 6). God alone can attach supernatural grace to a simple act or ceremony; therefore the "imposition of hands" which gives priestly rank and power is of divine origin and is a real sacrament.

"A Priest Forever." As we have explained elsewhere, this sacrament, like two others, imprints on the soul a mark or character which is indelible. Neither sin nor apostasy can ever blot it out. A man who has been made a priest is "a priest forever."

Just as in Baptism his soul is stamped with a character which makes him a Christian, just as by Confirmation he is made a good soldier of Christ, so by Holy Orders he is marked with an eternal seal as God's minister, with power to perform the sacred functions of a Christian priest.

The Institution of Holy Orders. The Church of God is a visible Church, kept together by visible signs, by "the faith which cometh by hearing," and by external government and discipline. Therefore, in its constitution there must be two distinct classes: those who administer sacraments and those who receive them, those who teach and those who are taught, those who rule and those who obey.

Our blessed Saviour gave the fullness of the priesthood to His Apostles. When did He give it? At the Last Supper He conferred upon them the power of offering sacrifice when He commissioned them to do in commemoration of Him what He had done for them; as this power was not for them only but for their successors as well, He necessarily gave them authority to transmit it to others. The second great office of the Christian priesthood, the power of forgiving sins, was imparted to them after the resurrection. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven." The third, which is authority and jurisdiction, the power to teach and to govern, He bestowed before His ascension, saying: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And we may say that He gave them their "faculties," fully installing them in their sacred office, when the Holy Spirit of God descended on them on the day of Pentecost.

In the Early Church. In the hierarchy of our Church the only ranks that are of divine institution are the Papacy and the episcopacy, the office of Pope and the office of bishop. The former, of course, had its origin in the selection of St. Peter to be the leader of the other Apostles. The latter was instituted when the Apostles were empowered to offer sacrifice and to ordain others, for we must remember that they, the first priests of the Church,

possessed "the fullness of the priesthood." They were not only priests but bishops.

After a time the Church saw fit to ordain priests who were not bishops, who could offer sacrifice and forgive sins, but who could not ordain. When did this practice begin? We do not know exactly. In early writings the terms *episcopus* and *presbyter* (bishop and priest) were often used interchangeably. But there is considerable evidence that the ordaining of simple priests was common in the first century. St. Ignatius, one of the earliest of Christian writers, bears witness thus: "It behooves you to obey your bishop, whether you be priest or deacon or layman." And, a little later, Tertullian says: "The bishop, indeed, has the right to give Baptism, and next the priest and the deacon, but not without the authority of the bishop."

The Separated Churches. In the schismatic Churches of the East there are real priests and real bishops, just as there are a real Mass and seven real sacraments. These bishops can consecrate other bishops and ordain other priests; these priests can offer validly the Holy Mass. But, although they have retained the line of apostolic succession, they have severed the tie which formerly bound them to the one fold of Christ. They have, indeed, the powers given by ordination, but they have lost their jurisdiction; for they are no longer in union with the centre of unity, the vicar of Christ on earth.

How is it with the sects of Protestantism? Have they a priesthood? No. There is no succession. There are many breaks in the chain. Take the Anglican Church, from which the American Protestant Episcopal Church has sprung. For three centuries it neither claimed Apostolic succession nor practised ordination in the Catholic sense. It ordained ministers, indeed, but not priests, for, as it had no sacrifice to be offered, it did not intend to confer on its ministers any sacrificial power. It had lost its faith in the priestly power of forgiving sins, and it had no intention of imparting such power to its clergy. Not having priests, it could not have bishops, for the Christian Church throughout all its history has chosen its bishops from its priesthood. The Anglican

or Episcopal minister may be and often is sincere and zealous; he may help others by preaching and prayer and good example, but he cannot help them by offering sacrifice or by forgiving sin, because he is not a priest.

The Effects and the Minister. We have already spoken of the mark or character which this sacrament imprints on the soul. Like the other "sacraments of the living," it increases sanctifying grace, and gives sacramental graces which aid the recipient to perform effectively the duties of his state.

Who can administer it? A bishop only. Not even the Pope himself could delegate to a priest the power of ordaining other priests. Only those who have the plenitude of the priesthood, only those who possess all the powers which the Apostles had, can transmit that priesthood and those powers to others.

The Requirements. Who can receive it? A man only. The "devout feminine sex," as the Breviary deservedly calls it, is not eligible to Orders. Christ was a man, and only a man can represent Him. The candidate for Holy Orders must have been baptized, and he must wish to be ordained; otherwise his ordination would be invalid. For lawfulness and worthiness, he must be in the state of grace; he must have (or think that he has) a vocation or call from God to the priestly state, and he must be free from certain impediments which would render his ordination unlawful.

In the Western Church, that is, in the Latin rite (and in some other rites as well), the man who wishes to become a priest must be unmarried, and must have the intention of so remaining. The rules of celibacy for the clergy differ in other parts of the world, but this is not a matter of doctrine but of discipline, and need not concern us here.

The priesthood is one of God's greatest gifts. The ministration of the priest brings grace to us throughout our lives. In helpless infancy the waters of Baptism flowed upon us from his hand. When sin stained our souls, he has been the judge and the pardoner. Daily he offers for us to God the most sublime act of worship, the holy sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ. From

him we receive that same body and blood in the sacrament of love. He gives the Church's blessing to Christian wedlock. He anoints the dying man with holy oil, that "the prayer of faith may save the sick man." And even when the human soul has passed from this world, even when it has been judged, the priest's daily Mass has marvelous power to shorten the period of temporal atonement. Such is the Catholic priesthood, the channel of most of the graces which God gives to us, His children, who are members of His one true Church.

Chapter XXIX

MATRIMONY

THESE are days when, in our country and in nearly every other land as well, there is little reverence for the marriage tie, which is the very foundation of the social edifice. Our newspapers publish daily a long list of divorces granted by the authority of the courts of the State. Among non-Catholics, marriage is deserving more and more the name of "a successive polygamy."

The spread of infidel ideas throughout the world has resulted in the open teaching of doctrines that tend to subvert and destroy the very purpose of matrimony. "Birth control" and a system of "eugenics" that is worse than pagan are being propagated constantly in our midst, and with alarming success, not only among Protestants and infidels, but among those who call themselves Catholics. The birth-rate has declined steadily in nearly every country, and notably in our own. A large family has come to be considered the height of folly and imprudence. Love of pleasure, the shirking of responsibility, a shrinking from self-denial and sacrifice—such are the causes of this deplorable evil. They have become so widespread because the modern world has lost sight of the true end and aim of matrimony.

Marriage, in our world of to-day, is looked upon as a contract that may be lifelong if the contracting parties agree, or that may be easily dissolved if they quarrel. "Off with the old love, on with the new!" Many non-Catholics recognize, in a somewhat vague way, that this contract is of a sacred nature, or at least that it should be sanctified by a sacred rite. But our Church has a far higher appreciation of it. She holds that it is one of the

seven sacraments instituted by our blessed Saviour for the giving of His grace to mankind.

A Contract and a Sacrament. Christian matrimony is "a sacrament which unites a Christian man and woman in lawful marriage." Any marriage is a contract, but a marriage of baptized Christians is more. It is a true sacrament, giving great and special graces to those who enter worthily into the married state.

The contract of matrimony is a lawful union of a man and woman by which they give themselves to each other for mutual society and for the begetting of children. Just as in other things men can and do bind themselves by contracts of different kinds and with various objects in view, so the essential basis of matrimony is a contract by which a man and woman bind themselves to each other for certain definite objects. For this contract, as for any other, it is necessary that it be made by persons who are not legally hindered from making it; that it be made voluntarily, and that the parties openly express their mutual agreement to take each other then and there (not conditionally or at some future time) with the intention of living together as man and wife.

The Ends of Matrimony. Matrimony is the oldest contract in the world. It was instituted by God Himself when He created man. "God created man in his own image: male and female he created them; and God blessed them, and said: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. i. 27). We see from these words the primary end for which this contract should be entered into, to "increase and multiply." The very name of *matrimony* expresses this. It is *matris munus,* the office of mother; for the man and woman are united that the woman may bear children.

Further on in Genesis the creation of Eve is described, and the second end of marriage is emphasized. "And the Lord said: It is not good for man to be alone; let us make a help like unto himself. And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." And so the second end of matrimony is that the woman shall be the helpmate of the man, to aid and comfort him in an intimate

and lifelong union. And there is a third end and purpose, necessary especially after the fall of man, the more easy avoidance of carnal temptations and sins.

A True Sacrament. Our Catholic Church teaches that matrimony is a true and proper sacrament, one of the seven instituted by our Lord. Long before the great councils had clearly defined this doctrine it was embodied in the tradition of the Church. How luminous is the statement of St. Paul, in which he compares conjugal love to the love of our Saviour for His Church, and the matrimonial union to His union with that Church as with a mystical spouse! "So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; so also Christ doth the church, for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. . . . This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church" (Eph. v. 28).

When did our Saviour establish matrimony as a sacrament? We have no certain knowledge of this, for there is no mention of it in the Gospels. Some of the earlier Fathers thought that He sanctified marriage and raised it to the dignity of a sacrament by assisting at the wedding at Cana and there working His first miracle; but that Jewish wedding, of course, was not a Christian sacrament. Others refer to the words of our Lord cited by St. Matthew: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder"; but this declaration emphasizes rather the indissoluble nature of the contract than the grace-giving nature of the sacrament. It is more probable that the actual institution of this as of several other sacraments took place after His resurrection, when, as the Acts of the Apostles tell us, He spoke to His disciples "of the kingdom of God."

The Minister of Matrimony. Who is it that performs a marriage, in the sense of really uniting the parties in that contract and conferring on them that sacrament? Not the officiating priest. In nearly every case, indeed, his presence is necessary for the validity of the marriage, but he is not its minister; he is merely the official representative who receives the mutual consent of the contracting parties and gives the Church's blessing to their union. The parties themselves are the real ministers of this sacrament.

Its "matter" is the mutual giving of each to the other, and its "form" consists in the words or outward signs by which the man and woman mutually accept each other as husband and wife.

The Recipients. Who may receive this sacrament? Every baptized person who is not hindered by any natural impediment or by any that arises from the law of God or of the Church. Unbaptized persons, though they may enter into the contract of matrimony, are incapable of receiving the sacrament. God's law prohibits marriage between persons who are within certain very close degrees of blood-relationship. And, lastly, the law of the Church has established many other impediments, which need not concern us here, as they have been sufficiently explained in *The Externals of the Catholic Church, The Visible Church,* and in other works.

Indissolubility. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. xix. 6). Such are the words of our Blessed Lord, and such has been the constant teaching and practice of our Church. When the sacrament of matrimony has been received by a man and woman and ratified by their living together as man and wife, their union cannot be dissolved except by death.

When the Pharisees objected that Moses had permitted divorce, our Saviour answered that this was done because of the hardness of heart which characterized the Jewish people, and added: "I say to you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matt. xix. 9).

But does not this imply, as Protestants contend, that marriage can be dissolved for one cause? No. It is plain that not a divorce but a separation is permitted, not a dissolution of the bond, but a putting away of the guilty party; for elsewhere our Lord declares that "He that marries her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke xvi. 18). And St. Paul commands that the wife shall not depart from her husband, "and if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled with her husband" (1 Cor. vii. 11).

Here we see the distinction between the mere contract of marriage and the sacrament of Matrimony. The Jews were permitted to put away their wives and to dissolve the bond of marriage, for among them it was not a sacrament. So also the Church, for grave reasons, can dispense from the mere contract of marriage when the sacrament has not been received, as in the case of unbaptized persons. But when the sacrament has been received and has been ratified by cohabitation, marriage cannot be and never has been dissolved.

We all know how our Church has enforced this law, how she has lived up to this belief in every age of her history. We know how she has suffered for this principle, how schism and subsequent heresy invaded one of her choicest realms when one of her Sovereign Pontiffs refused to grant a divorce to a licentious English king.

But suppose that a Christian marriage has taken place, but that the parties have never lived together as man and wife, which is called the "consummating" of the marriage. In such a case it may be entirely dissolved by special act of the Holy See at the request of one or both of the parties, or because one or both are about to make a solemn vow of religious profession. This is in accordance with the ancient tradition of the Church, which permits and authorizes such action. But we reaffirm that when a valid Christian marriage has been ratified by connubial union it can never be declared null by the Church or by any other power.

The Graces of Matrimony. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Ps. cxxvi.). It is necessary to receive God's grace and blessing when entering the marriage state, on account of the many obligations imposed on married persons which cannot be fulfilled without special assistance from God, and on account of the many difficulties and trials inseparable from this state, which cannot be borne without special grace.

The married state, the indissoluble union of husband and wife, is, in a sense, a servitude; each party deliberately gives up personal freedom for life to the other. And that servitude must exist

as long as both parties live. There is no escape from it except by death. Once the word is spoken, the wife has given herself to the husband, the husband to the wife, and the union is for life.

If husband and wife love each other as they should, if their dispositions and inclinations are always in accord, their life will have a fair share of happiness, but such happiness, alas! is rare. Those who enjoy it should daily thank God for the blessings which such a union brings. And even then, even under such favorable circumstances, married life is a series of compromises and concessions, the giving up of one's own desires and inclinations to please one's life-partner. When children come, the responsibility of the father is thereby multiplied; as for the mother, besides the pain and danger of child-bearing, her whole life is filled with unending toil and countless anxieties. Is it not, then, a mercy of God that He has made Matrimony a sacrament, that He has provided a means of giving abundant graces to those who are assuming these responsibilities and incurring these burdens?

The married state is a holy state. When one lives therein as becomes a Christian, it is meritorious and leads to salvation. The sacrament of Matrimony gives the graces necessary to sanctify that state of life and to enable the married persons to fulfill rightly the duties which it imposes. Because marriage has been raised to the dignity of a sacrament, it imparts graces which aid the parties to love one another with a higher and purer and more enduring affection, to keep the vows which they have made at the altar of God, to be faithful in sickness and in health, in poverty as well as in riches, and to give proper care and Christian training to the offspring which may bless their union.

Chapter XXX

THE SAINTS

I BELIEVE in . . . the communion of saints." These words form a part of our Catholic creed. This belief is a part of our Catholic faith.

What does our Church believe and teach and practice concerning the saints?

For nineteen hundred years that Church has been in existence, teaching the same unchanging doctrine in every age and country. During all her history she has offered homage to the saints of God. She has on her list of known saints many thousands of names, the names of men and women whose souls are now in heaven; for a saint is a saved soul that has been made famous by exceptional virtue. These she honors; to them, indeed, she gives real religious veneration. But never in all these centuries has she adored any one but God.

False Charges. How persistently this Catholic doctrine has been assailed and misrepresented in the writings of those who are hostile to our Church! We Catholics are charged with "adoring the Virgin," with "giving divine honor to creatures," with "praying to men and women, asking mercy from them, and giving to them the adoration which should be given to God alone."

How strange it is that we, "adherents of Rome," are so utterly benighted that we have never realized that we were taking part in false worship when we honored the saints! How strange, too, that there is no mention of "adoring the saints" in the writings of Catholicism for nineteen centuries!

We can understand why there might be prejudice, but why should there be ignorance? Catholic writers without number have painstakingly explained the doctrines of the Church, in this matter

as in all else, and have given, over and over again, thorough and logical answers to those who criticise her. The little child's Catechism states with brevity and clearness the Church's teaching concerning the saints of God, but those who misstate and attempt to controvert that teaching have evidently never read even that simplest epitome of our religion.

The saints are creatures. They are not gods. They are souls that are now enjoying their eternal reward, chosen friends of God who were faithful in using the graces which He bestowed on them, and who have thereby won the glory and happiness of heaven. They are deserving of our homage because of their holiness. They are united to us in the "communion of saints," which means that although they are now in heaven they are still members of the Church of God. We honor them, and they pray for us. They do not and cannot show us any mercy or give us any grace, but they can and do obtain both mercy and grace for us from God. They present our prayers to the Almighty, uniting them with their own; and we honor them with religious homage, that thereby we may obtain the powerful help of those friends of God who stand ever before His throne.

Adoration versus Veneration. The Catholic Church always makes a complete and clear distinction between the supreme worship which she gives to God alone and the relative and inferior homage which she pays to the saints. Some of the confusion in the minds of non-Catholics may arise from the fact that Catholic authors who wrote in Latin used the word *cultus* to denote both adoration and veneration, and that we have no one word in English that will express the meaning of this Latin word except *worship*. But the Church always distinguished emphatically between the *cultus duliæ,* which we may translate "the homage of veneration," and the *cultus latriæ,* which signifies "the worship of adoration." The former is given to the saints; the latter to God alone.

Our worship of the saints, then, is veneration; a higher degree of it, called *hyperdulia,* is given to the Queen of Saints; but adoration is given to no one but God. Any attempt to adore a creature

would certainly be false worship, but the Catholic Church has never done so. She adores God, and God only. She venerates the saints with religious homage.

We believe that in heaven we have a host of friends, who are also friends of our blessed Saviour; that one of them is His Mother, loved by Him so dearly that He will grant her every prayer; that one is His foster-father, whom He obeyed and reverenced upon earth and loves in heaven; and that the others are His loyal servants who lived in His love and died in His grace, and who possess Him now and forever. We believe that this "great multitude which no man can number" is a part of God's Church, and is united in bonds of charity with the other parts of that Church on earth and in purgatory. We believe, therefore, that we should honor the saints because God has honored them; that we should pay religious veneration to them collectively and separately. And we believe also that they can and do intercede for us, that they hear our prayers and present them to Him who loves the saints and us.

When we offer homage to them, are we depriving God of adoration? No; we are adoring Him all the more, because we are honoring the results of His infinite graces, which have been the means of making these men and women glorious saints of God.

The Communion of Saints. The blessed ones who are in heaven, the souls that are in purgatory, and we who are still here on earth, are all members of one great society. The Church of God is not restricted to this world. When I shall pass into eternity I shall not lose the seal of Baptism which imprinted on my soul the character of a Christian, a member of the Church of Christ. That seal is indelible, eternal. If I go to purgatory I am still a member of that Church. If I enter heaven, the eternal fold of the Good Shepherd, I certainly do not cease to belong to His flock. Membership in the Church does not end when this earthly life is over. It endures throughout eternity, unless I lose my soul.

The members of the Church who are suffering in penitential fires are known as the Church Suffering; those who have attained

to the glory and bliss of heaven are the Church Triumphant; and we who are still on earth, still in the heat of the conflict, are the Church Militant, the Church of warfare—three divisions of the great Church of God. Our holy faith teaches us that we of the Church Militant can help the members of the Church Suffering and can honor the members of the Church Triumphant and be benefited by their prayers, and that they, who have fought the good fight and are enjoying their reward in the living presence of God, can help us who are still in the conflict.

Dear Catholic reader, you and I are units in a great organization which extends all over this world of ours and exists in another world as well. Here on earth there are perhaps four hundred millions like you and me, members of the visible Church of Christ. There are, doubtless, other millions who belong to what we call "the soul of the Church," although they are not outwardly united to it. Is this all the membership of Christ's Church? No; there are countless others, "a multitude that no man can number," the glorious host of God's saints in heaven. They are just as truly members of His Church as we are. They possess eternal happiness; they are dwelling in the living presence of God, they are enjoying the vision of His glory, but they did not lose their membership in His Church when they entered His kingdom. And there are others also, other friends of God, the patient souls that are in penitential fires, awaiting their eternal and sure reward. These did not leave the Church when they left this world; they are still Christians and Catholics.

Truly, our Church is a marvelous society, founded among men and for men, but extending far beyond this tiny world of ours, this atom in space upon which God has unaccountably bestowed His choicest gifts. The holy ones who stand before His throne are a part of His Church; the souls whom He chastens in purgatory are still within His fold; we who are still on earth, to whom God has vouchsafed the light of His truth, are in communion with all these others who "have gone before."

The Intercession of the Saints. Is it reasonable to suppose that the saints can aid us? Why not? We who are here on

earth are urged to pray one for another. We are told to go to God with the needs of others as well as with our own. Such is the command of Christian charity. When we shall have reached heaven, will that charity cease? Will we have less interest in the welfare of our neighbor there than we had here? Will we cease to pray for him when our prayers will be most efficacious, when we shall be friends of God, standing before His throne? It is hard to see a reason why souls that are with God, that are enjoying eternal glory and happiness, should be unable to exercise Christian charity and incapable of interceding for their brethren.

Non-Catholics, as a class, do not accept this doctrine. What do the Scriptures teach us, the sacred word of God, which our separated brethren cite so constantly as the "one rule of faith"? In St. John's apocalyptic vision he saw the elders "prostrate before the lamb, having each . . . golden vials, which are the prayers of the saints." It matters little whether the "saints" are on earth or in heaven; in either supposition their prayers are offered to God by those who are before His throne, that is, the saints in heaven are praying to Him.

The doctrine of their intercessory power is as old as the Church. It is mentioned in the works of the Fathers of every age, and in other authentic writings, such as the *Acts of the Martyrs*. The blessed ones in heaven are represented as interceding for the faithful upon earth. "In heaven," said the martyr Theodotus, "I will pray confidently for you to God."

The Saints Hear Us. How do the members of the Church Triumphant know the needs of us who are the Church Militant? That the communion of saints may be effective, it is necessary that we who are here upon earth shall be able to speak to our friends in heaven, so that they may speak to God for us. How is this effected? We do not know. Catholic theologians and spiritual writers have speculated about it, but we have no certainty as to the exact means which God provides for this communication. Some have supposed that the Almighty allows those who are in His presence to see in Him, "as in a mirror," all that concerns them about earthly things. At any rate, the knowledge which

they have and the petitions which they may receive from us depend entirely upon God's goodness; beyond that our weak human intellect cannot go.

How We Honor the Saints. The Church Triumphant receives from the Church Militant a religious veneration which is expressed in many ways. In return for the prayers which are offered to God for us by the blessed ones in heaven, the Church on earth has established festivals in their honor. Nearly all the days of the year are "saints' days," and on one day, the Feast of All Saints, she honors them collectively. On the festival-day of a saint he is specially invoked and honored in the Holy Mass, and in all Masses mention is made of certain famous servants of God. Churches and altars are consecrated in honor of the saints, and each altar-stone is, as it were, a sepulchre, enclosing relics which are fragments of their mortal remains. The Church allows us to venerate their images. She has provided each of us with a heavenly patron and model, by giving us the name of a saint at our Baptism. She offers public homage to them also in her Divine Office, in litanies, and in many other approved and indulgenced prayers.

We see, then, that in working out our salvation we do not work alone. We have a mighty host of friends who are helping us. The blessed saints, who have themselves fought and suffered in this world, are interceding for us before the throne of God. They are members of His Church, as we are. They are bound to us in the bonds of Christian charity. They sympathize with us in our trials, for they have had trials of their own. They are offering their prayers for us that we may win the glorious reward which they themselves are enjoying. And if through God's mercy we obtain that reward, we shall realize then far better than we do now, how great a store of grace and merit they have gained for us, their brethren, who are striving here in this vale of tears and seeking to reach the goal to which they have already attained.

Chapter XXXI

MIRACLES

THERE is one miracle, and one only, which is "a fundamental of our faith." It is the resurrection of our Saviour from the dead. "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14). This has been treated in an earlier chapter, and it will not be necessary to review here the proofs of that all-important dogma of our Christian faith. Nor shall we speak here of the other miracles wrought by our blessed Redeemer, by which He demonstrated His divine power and the truth of His teachings. But we Catholics believe that countless other miracles have taken place, not only in the distant days of patriarchs and prophets but also throughout the centuries of our Church's history.

The Meaning of "a Miracle." What do we mean when we speak of miracles? The Latin word *miraculum* signifies a marvel, a prodigy, something wonderful, but not necessarily something that exceeds the laws of nature. But when we use the word in its theological sense we apply it to an event so wonderful that it cannot be accounted for by natural causes.

God is always working in this world of ours, and He manifests His power ordinarily in accord with what we call the natural law. In other words, nature and the natural law are the continual work of God. That law is not independent of God, nor is He in any way bound to obey it. He made it, and He keeps it in operation. His power is as necessary for each movement and each development of the things that make up our world as it was for their creation. God is the Creator of the natural law as well as of all the things that ordinarily obey that law. We see, therefore, that miracles are possible, that God can dispense at any time from the law which

He has made. He is able to produce effects which transcend the operation of natural causes and are outside the scope of the natural law itself.

The Catholic Doctrine. The belief of our Church in regard to miracles is as follows: A miracle is an effect which is in some important respect beyond the law of all created nature. It is an event which exceeds all natural powers. These powers were established by God, and produce their effects ordinarily in a uniform manner, and this is why we usually can control these natural agents and make them serve us, because we can count on the effects which known causes will produce. But God is not bound by these laws. He is free, subject to no law whatever, because His power has made all laws and His wisdom can abrogate or suspend any of them. By an act of His infinite will He can cause created things to produce effects far beyond their natural capacity.

We see, then, that the Church's doctrine as to the possibility of miracles is most reasonable. The "Modernist" contention that there can be no exception to the natural law is really a denial of God, for it attempts to do away with one of His essential attributes, His infinite power over the universe which He has created.

A miracle is not "an effect without a cause." It is produced by God, the first cause. It is not a mere capricious exercise of His power. He has established natural causes and natural laws according to which He operates usually to bring about natural results, but He is not obliged to operate according to these laws. He may at any time produce effects which transcend them. He has not bound Himself to use always the rules which He himself has made. He may act otherwise when He wishes. These laws are His creatures, and He may modify them, or make exceptions to them, or even abolish them if such be His will; for He is the all-powerful, the "Creator of heaven and earth and of all things."

From God Alone. No one but God can work a miracle. The creature, be he angel or saint, is merely God's instrument. Our Lord Jesus Christ was God, and therefore could perform miracles by His own power, to attest His divinity and His mission.

Miracles wrought by the saints are manifestations of the power of God, operating through them.

When we say, then, that a saint "performs a miracle" we use a figure of speech. No human being, no earthly power, can really perform a miracle. It requires the power of God. When we Catholics speak of the miracles of St. Anthony, or of St. Ann, or of "the Little Flower," or of any other servant of God, we do not intend to say that the saint really wrought the miracle. We mean that through that saint's intercession God has been pleased to grant a favor which exceeds the laws of nature, in order to manifest His power, to give testimony to the holiness of that saint, and to reward the faith of some petitioner.

Evidences of Sanctity. In earlier portions of this book we considered the qualities or marks of the true Church of Christ, and we mentioned and described the mark of sanctity. Our Catholic Church is holy. She does not merely teach her children the things necessary for salvation; she urges them to practice the counsels of perfection. She provides them with abundant means of sanctification, through her devotions and pious practices, and most of all through her sacraments and the great Eucharistic sacrifice. And the results have been wonderful. In every century of her history she has had among her members a countless multitude of men and women who have been true saints of God, famous for their holiness, living lives of wondrous perfection, practising the Christian virtues in a heroic degree. And the sanctity of many of these illustrious servants of God has been amply attested by the miracles which have been wrought through their prayers.

Such favors manifest not only the holiness of the saint through whose intercession they have been granted, but also the holiness of the Church herself. We read in the Gospel that certain disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus, to inquire whether He was really the long-expected Messias. And He answered: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4).

The miracles of Christ were the proofs which proclaimed the holiness of His mission.

In similar manner, the miracles which have taken place in our Church's history are proofs of her holiness. It does not follow that all persons through whom God works a miracle are necessarily good and holy. It is possible that true miracles might be wrought through the instrumentality of evil men who are preaching the faith, for the object of such miracles is not to attest the worthiness or sanctity of the teachers, but to confirm the truths which they teach and to promote the cause which they represent. But, as a rule, miracles are effected through the intercession of holy men and women. And very often they are the signs by which God attests the sanctity of His servants and the power of their intercessory prayers.

Again, the instrument of a miracle may be some lifeless thing (a relic, for example) which has in itself no excellence or quality that could effect the result produced. Here again we must remember that it is Catholic doctrine that the miracle in question must have been and can only be wrought by God. No creature of His, living or lifeless, no angel, no saint, no relic, no image can ever, of itself, cause any miraculous exception to the laws of nature.

In Our Holy Church. Miracles take place in the Catholic Church to-day, just as they have through all her history of nineteen centuries, and we do not believe that they occur outside her fold. Our blessed Saviour promised that His Church would be endowed with miraculous powers which would illustrate her sanctity. When He sent His Apostles to preach His Gospel throughout the world, He declared: "And these signs shall follow them: In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 17, 18). And at another time He repeated this promise in even more emphatic terms: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works which I do he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do" (John xiv. 12).

Our Lord kept His promise. His Apostles wrought many miracles, which we know and accept on the authority of the inspired word of God. They had the power, as He had, of casting out devils; they received and exercised the gift of tongues, especially on the day of Pentecost. "Are not all these, that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born?" (Acts ii. 7, 8). We read of the miraculous preservation of St. Paul after his shipwreck on the island of Malta, when he was bitten by a poisonous serpent, and of the curing of the cripple at the temple gate by Saints Peter and John.

It was not only in the apostolic age that this God-given power has been manifested in the Church of God. There are countless well-attested miracles recorded in the lives of the great saints of every century. Of many of these we have indisputable evidence; for they have been investigated by commissions established under the Church's law, not by credulous or superstitious or ignorant men, but by wise and cautious officials who demanded irrefutable evidence before they were convinced of the genuineness of the claims set before them. For many centuries the Church has ruled that no one shall be canonized as a saint until a most searching investigation has been made and the existence of real miracles wrought through his intercession has been clearly shown.

The Theology of Miracles. A miracle, in the language of the Fathers of the Church and of theologians, may be "above nature," "outside nature," and "contrary to nature." Let us see what these terms mean.

A miracle is said to be "above nature" when the effect produced is entirely above the natural powers and forces of creatures; for example, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is "outside nature" when natural forces may have power to produce the effect, at least in part, but could not of themselves have produced it as it really happened; for example, the instantaneous cure of a cancer. And a miracle is said to be "contrary to nature" when the effect is contrary to the natural order of things, as when the three youths in the fiery furnace were preserved unharmed.

Again, an event may be miraculous "as to substance," when the

effect is of such a kind that no natural power could bring it to pass in any manner whatsoever; for example, the raising of the dead to life. Or it may be miraculous "as to manner"; that is, there may be forces capable of producing that effect, but here and now these forces are not present; or it is produced in a manner wholly different from the ordinary working of these natural forces. Let us illustrate this: We know that leprosy may be, in some cases, curable; but we know also that it is not curable by any natural means in an instant. Therefore, when we ascertain that such a cure has taken place by a word, by a touch, in a moment, we know that that cure is a miracle.

The Voice of the Skeptic. During all the centuries of Christianity the existence and the possibility of miracles have been denied by those who have rejected divine revelation. And at no time have these denials been so numerous and so vehement as at the present day. We have the so-called Deists, who scoff at the idea of the providence of God. We have the agnostics, who practically deny even His existence as an intelligent Being. A host of non-Catholic writers and preachers who still consider themselves to be Christians allege that miracles are simply events effected by unknown laws, that "the miracle of one age becomes the ordinary working of nature in the next," and that "all Biblical miracles will disappear with the progress of science."

According to the teaching of such as these, this universe of ours is a great machine in a state of evolution or continuous development (which is probably true), and everything in it works according to natural laws without any exception whatever (which is most certainly false). "What is not natural does not happen." "The uniformity of nature rules miracles out of consideration." These are samples of the gratuitous and flippant assertions of agnostic scientists. Even among the more conservative thinkers there is a tendency to discard the evidence of miracles as a Christian testimony, and to base the proof of Christianity on internal evidence alone. But we Catholics accept that evidence, not only of the Biblical miracles, which were proofs of the divine nature of the revelation made to man, but also of those of later days, even

of our own times, which are a wondrous manifestation of the holiness of God's Church, of the love of the Almighty for us His creatures, and of the intercessory power of the prayers of His saints.

"But are not you Catholics extremely credulous in regard to alleged miracles?" Some of us may be, but one who is really a Catholic is not superstitious or unduly credulous. The more superstitious a man is, the less perfect he is in religious things; for real religion and superstition are opposite terms. Religion teaches us the love and providence of God; and it is surely not superstition to believe that God can exercise them when He wills, and that He does so even in our day. A miracle must be wrought for a good purpose. It is not a mere marvel, meant to gratify the curiosity of the spectator or the vanity of the performer. It is a sign of God's presence, an evidence of His power and providence. It brings us nearer to Him; it shows us that He is so solicitous for our well-being that He is willing to make exceptions to His ordinary laws in order to grant favors to those whom He loves.

"Catholics give assent to a host of fantastic narratives that have no more foundation in truth than the adventures of Gulliver or Munchausen." Let us see just what assent we are required to give, in the matter of miracles.

Here is the Catholic position, and a sensible position it is: We are required to admit the *possibility* of miracles, for we cannot set bounds to the power of God. We are required to believe firmly the miracles recorded in the Bible, for we accept that sacred book as the inspired word of God.

What about other miracles? We Catholics, though we may be charged with being "superstitious" and "benighted," are *not bound* to believe any of them. We may accept those recorded in the lives of certain saints if we are satisfied with the evidence offered, and we may reject them if we are not. Even if the Roman Congregation of Sacred Rites accepts them as proofs of sanctity, *we* are not bound to do so, even when they are approved by that eminent authority. We may believe that such or such a

miracle took place at Lourdes, because there is good evidence that it did, or we may reject it because of insufficient testimony. Our Church does not compel us to accept this or that miracle of these later days; she merely requires us to admit their possibility. Of course, it would be rash and even absurd to reject all miracles except the Biblical ones. There is too much testimony, of a kind that admits of no uncertainty, in support of many of them. God's providence and power are as great now as they were in Bible days. The need of "signs and wonders" is not as great as it was in the early years of Christianity, but there are thousands of modern miracles that are well attested. Every year a non-partisan commission at Lourdes certifies to the miraculous nature of many cures. Every year the Congregation of Sacred Rites, after long and thorough investigations, declares that through the intercession of this or that servant of God certain miracles have been wrought. The hand of God is not shortened, even in these scientific twentieth century days, and wondrous manifestations of His power can be found in our present-day world as well as in the far-distant years when the Apostles went forth to conquer the pagan world for Christ.

Chapter XXXII

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

"HELL is a state to which the wicked are condemned, and in which they are deprived of the sight of God for all eternity, and are in dreadful torments" (the Catechism).

These words express clearly and briefly the belief of our Church concerning the fate of those who die in mortal sin. Our Catholic faith teaches us that God's justice condemns such a soul to everlasting torment. There is a place or state called hell; and human souls are suffering there and will continue to suffer for all eternity.

Hell is "the great lake of the wrath of God" (Apoc. xiv. 9), an abyss of fire wherein God imprisons and punishes forever the fallen angels and unrepentant human sinners; a place of torment, of indescribable misery, "where dwelleth the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror."

The Malice of Sin. Mortal sin is so great an evil that God, who is infinitely good and infinitely just, and who is always willing to show mercy to the repentant sinner, condemns to everlasting torment the sinner who does not repent. Every mortal sin has so much malice that an eternity of awful suffering is its only adequate punishment. The soul that passes out of this world burdened with the guilt of mortal sin must suffer for all eternity, for sin cannot be forgiven without repentance, and repentance after death is an impossibility.

How terrible is the description in St. John's Apocalypse, telling of the sufferings of the lost: "And they gnawed their tongues for pain; and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds, and did no penance for their works" (xiv. 11).

The soul that is in hell is there because it has chosen hell, not from any arbitrary decree of God. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live" (Ezech. xxxiii. 11). In the words of St. Augustine, "Eternal woe is due to him who destroys in himself eternal good."

Immortality. Man's soul cannot die. Once living, it lives forever. It came into existence by a direct creative act of God, and, once created, it is immortal. It is not subject to the laws of matter, because it is not matter; it is a spirit, and consequently is immaterial, and cannot corrupt or die. Death means dissolution, the separation of a thing into its component elements or parts; and in the soul there are no elements or parts to be thus separated. It is not formed, as the body is, of material particles, of chemical elements. Therefore in it there can be no dissolving into parts. It is a spiritual substance, and it is not impaired or destroyed by time, or age, or decay.

The only way in which the soul could cease to exist would be by annihilation, by being destroyed by an act of God. He alone could destroy it, for He alone could create it. Will He do so? No. He has decreed that it is to have an unending existence, of happiness or of misery, of union with Him or of separation from Him, according to its deserving.

Dear reader, *your soul is to live forever,* somewhere. After a time, an hour, a day, a year, a few years at the most, it will leave its earthly tenement, your body. This will become lifeless, because its life-giving principle will have left it; and shortly it will decompose until it ceases to be a human body. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

The Particular Judgment. What of the soul that has left that body? It will appear immediately before God, to be judged. This is the doctrine of our Church, based on her unchanging tradition and on many texts of Holy Writ. Speaking of death, St. Paul says " and after this, the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). St. Luke tells of the rich man who "died and was buried in hell" (xvi. 22), and of the promise of our Saviour to the penitent thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (xxiii. 43).

Is it not clear that these must have been judged immediately after death?

When we appear before that tribunal, what will our sentence be? We ourselves are writing that sentence during our lives here on earth. It will be heaven, or purgatory, or hell. If we appear before God purified from every stain, we shall be worthy of eternal companionship with Him, of everlasting happiness, of the vision of His glory forever. If the soul, freed from grievous sin, be not entirely purified, God's justice will exact a temporal expiation in purgatory. And if we have been called to our accounting with mortal guilt upon us, we shall be objects of His eternal wrath. If we are enemies of God at that dread hour of judgment, we shall be His enemies forever. A place of eternal woe was created by God for the fallen angels, the first rebels against His law and His love, and this will be the abode forever of the human sinner who has not repented. Eternal separation from God, eternal remorse that is not repentance, eternal torment that far surpasses any earthly pain—such is the awful penalty in that place of unending and indescribable misery which we call hell. Indeed, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31).

The General Judgment. Besides the individual or particular judgment which will be passed upon your soul and mine, and which will determine that soul's lot for eternity, there will be another judgment, the great day of final reckoning, when all mankind will appear together before the tribunal of God, and this world of ours will cease to be. "The heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up" (2 Peter iii. 10).

When will this judgment be? We do not know. It will come suddenly, so we are taught by Holy Writ, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." During the days of the Apostles it was widely believed that the end of the world and the general judgment were near at hand, from a misunderstanding of the words of our Saviour regarding St. John: "So I will have him to re-

main till I come, what is it to thee?" As the year 1000 drew near, an idea was prevalent that the judgment day would come at that date. And when this twentieth century of ours shall be nearing its end, when the "seven more Popes" of the so-called prophecy of Malachy shall have successively ruled the Church of God, it is very likely that the notion of the approaching "consummation of all things" will be revived. Will it come then? We do not know.

Where will it be? The prophet Joel has told us that the place of judgment will be the valley of Josaphat, near Jerusalem, which may be a literal truth or a figure of speech. But it will be somewhere, and we shall be there.

Who will be the judge? Our blessed Saviour, God made man. He will appear in His human form, "in the clouds of heaven, with great power and majesty." Before His judgment-seat all mankind will appear: Adam and all his descendants, all the uncounted myriads that have peopled this little globe which we call the earth.

The Resurrection of the Body. The constant and uniform teaching of our Church, embodied in the creeds which form her profession of faith, is that our bodies as well as our souls will be judged at the last day. Therefore these bodies will rise again, to appear before the great tribunal of God.

How graphic is the description given by St. Paul: "We shall all indeed rise again. . . . In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible" (1 Cor. xv. 51). And to St. John, in his apocalyptic vision, was revealed that awful scene when the bodies of the dead shall answer the call of God's angel: "The sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works" (Apoc. xx. 13-15).

Is such a resurrection possible? Certainly. Your body and mine will have been resolved into dust, but the material elements which composed them will still exist. He who in the beginning created the body of the first man "from the slime of the earth"

can gather together the dust into which men's bodies have crumbled, and remake them as they were; for "to God all things are possible." He will not only remake them; He will endow them with immortality. They have died once and corrupted once; neither death nor corruption will come to them again. The soul that once inhabited each of these bodies will enter into it anew, and body and soul will live their eternal life together in weal or in woe, in heaven or in hell. "And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into everlasting life" (Matt. xxv. 46).

The Existence of Hell. Is there a hell? Yes. God has made a place where the wicked are punished, and that punishment *will never end.* The texts are well-nigh numberless in Holy Writ concerning this awful truth. We read of "the hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished" (Mark ix. 45). "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). "They who obey not the Gospel shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction from the face of the Lord and for the glory of his power" (2 Thess. viii. 9). "He will give fire and worms to their flesh that they may burn and feel forever" (Judith, xvi. 21). "The smoke of their torments shall ascend forever and ever" (Apoc. xiv. 2).

How can we explain these plain and clear declarations of God's inspired word unless we admit the existence and the pains and the eternity of hell? The same divine authority which tells us that heaven and its joys are eternal tells us also that hell and its torments are as eternal as heaven. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you. . . . Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

And still the unbeliever will try to convince himself that such a place of punishment does not exist, or that its pains are not eternal.

Where is Hell? God has not told us where hell is. It was a common opinion among medieval theologians of high repute that it is beneath the earth, for do not "fire and brimstone" pour forth from volcanoes? But this quaint belief is hardly tenable. Hell

was made for the fallen angels, and this earth of ours probably did not exist in any form when they fell. Hell is to endure forever, but our earth is composed of matter, and will some day cease to exist; therefore we cannot conceive of it as containing for all eternity a place of punishment.

The Pains of Hell. And what will be the punishment? It will be twofold, the "pain of loss" and the "pain of sense." The pain of loss is the privation of the vision of God forever; more than that, it is an everlasting hatred of God. The pain of sense is physical torment, unending anguish of such fearful intensity that we in this world can form no conception of it. And to this is added the horror of being surrounded forever by myriads of fallen angels full of malice against mankind there as they are here, and by other myriads of the vilest of sinners, hating and cursing God and His saints forever.

According to the common opinion of theologians, there will be real fire in hell. This is not an article of faith, but it is the uniform teaching of the Church's writers for nineteen centuries. Real fire, not quenchable, like our earthly fire, but enduring in all its intensity forever! The fires of earth cannot harm a soul, but that of hell can torture a soul even when the body is not present. God gives it that power because it is an instrument of His justice. It will burn, but it will not consume. It will not need fuel of any kind. It will burn forever. And within that fiery furnace will be countless millions of souls for which our Saviour died.

They will suffer for all eternity, and they will never make satisfaction for their sins. There will be no hope in hell, for there can be no release from its torments. There will be no love, for the lost souls will look upon God only as an avenger, and will hate Him forever.

Some Objections. It may be objected: "This idea of hell is a merciless idea. God, who is infinitely good, could not condemn one of His creatures to suffer forever."

Why not? They are *His* creatures, bound to keep His law, and they have not done so. He is indeed infinitely good; He loves

His creatures in an infinite degree; He has given them free will, together with sufficient grace. They have rejected His love, have insulted His sovereign majesty, and in His wisdom He has decreed that such sin, unrepented for, deserves eternal separation from Him and eternal punishment.

"God would be cruel to condemn a soul to everlasting torment for one mortal sin."

The number of sins makes no difference whatever. The soul that is in mortal sin is an enemy of God, and by its own free will. During our earthly life God is willing and ready to pardon any sin and any number of sins. This life is our opportunity for enjoying God's mercy. In the world to come we shall experience His justice. He will rightly punish the soul that appears before Him in a state of final impenitence, whether it be burdened with one sin or a million.

"God knows beforehand those who will be lost. Why, then, does He create them?"

Here we encounter the great problem and mystery of predestination, and we can only say that our puny human intellect cannot fathom the designs of God. In this question, as in many others, there are mysteries which will be seen far more clearly in the life to come. God created man for eternal happiness, and offers him ample means to obtain it. If a soul is lost, that is entirely the fault of that soul. It is true that He knows, dear reader, whether your soul and mine will be saved or lost. To Him there is no future; all is present. Theologians have discussed this matter learnedly, and have given various and abstruse explanations. St. Hilary, speaking of the souls that are saved, sums up one opinion in these words: "God did not predestine before He preknew, but for those whose merits He foresaw He predestined the reward." And in like manner we can say that God has foreseen the wickedness of the sinner, which means his willful and final rejection of divine mercy, and has predestined the eternity of suffering which is the penalty deserved by that soul.

We know, then, that there is a hell, a place of punishment for unrepentant sinners. We know that its pains are terrible beyond

conception, a fiery torment that far surpasses any earthly suffering. And we know that there is even a greater punishment, eternal separation from God.

Hell will have no end. While the ages of eternity roll by, while God's elect will be living in His presence forever in the enjoyment of the vision of His glory, the souls of the lost will be in unending pain, separated from God forever because during their time of probation here they have wilfully rejected His mercy, have died unrepentant, and have thus rendered themselves eternally unworthy of His love. The idea of hell is indeed a fearful one, but it is a true idea, revealed by God, and a part of our Catholic faith.

May you and I, dear reader, never know anything more of hell than the summary of our Church's teaching here set before us. Our heritage is heaven, and wonderful indeed will be our bliss there in the living presence of God and in the company of His saints. There will be no hell for us unless we deserve it, unless we pass out of this life in a state of unrepented grievous sin. Let us strive to be not sinners but saints; and then the reward of saints will be ours: the eternal vision of God.

Chapter XXXIII

THE HOLY SOULS

IN another chapter we have explained the Church's doctrine of the communion of saints, but a brief review of it will be useful here, that we may understand clearly our relations with the souls that have passed from this world in the state of grace, but have not yet attained to the happiness of heaven.

There are three great divisions in the Church of God, which is a society that exists not only in this world but in the world to come. We who are still on this earth are known as the Church Militant, because we are still engaged in conflict with the evil one, still striving to win salvation. The angels and saints in heaven are the Church Triumphant, enjoying glory and happiness. And the souls in purgatory form the Church Suffering, because they are undergoing temporary punishment to expiate the guilt of venial faults or to be cleansed from the "remains" of forgiven sin.

What is Purgatory? Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time, after death, on account of their sins. When we reach the end of this life, if we have on our souls unforgiven venial sin, or if some purification is needed after serious sin has been pardoned, it is necessary that we do penance before we are fit to be admitted to companionship with the all-pure God. And in His mercy a place for this penance has been provided. We call it purgatory. Its name tells its nature. It is a place where the soul is purified by purgation, just as precious ore is separated from dross and impurity by the flame and heat of a furnace. It is a place where the souls of the just are punished for a time. They can no longer merit; they owe a debt to God, a debt not wholly paid. They can only pay it by suffering.

The Proofs. There are certain passages in the Old and New

Testaments which show us that there is a state or place of temporary suffering after death. Judas Maccabeus sent money to Jerusalem that sacrifices might be offered for the remission of the sins of the dead; "for it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." These "dead" are not in heaven, for in heaven there is no sin and no need of remission. They are not in hell, for there is no pardon and no hope of pardon in that place of eternal woe. And so there must be a third place wherein departed souls may dwell, a place where there is still sin upon them, and where that sin can be remitted. This place is purgatory.

"But," our adversaries will say, "we do not recognize the Books of the Maccabees as a part of the Scriptures." Protestants reject them, as well as some other parts of our Catholic Bible, because they contain doctrines opposed to Protestant teaching. But the Catholic Church, from early times, has held consistently that these last two books of the Old Testament are a part of the written word of God.

Suppose, however, that we consider these books merely as historical narratives. The passage cited shows clearly that it was the faith and practice of the Jews to offer prayers and sacrifices for the dead. And it is clear that they would not have believed that such prayers and sacrifices would help the souls of the departed unless these souls were in a place or state where pardon was possible and where pardon was needed. It is not possible in hell; it is not needed in heaven. There must be, therefore, another abode for the dead, and we call it purgatory.

There are other texts which are cited by the theologians, from various parts of the New Testament. The most convincing is that from the first epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (iii. 12), which ends with the words "but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." There is no fire, nor pain, nor penalty in heaven; the fire of hell does not save, but punishes forever. So we may conclude that there *is* a saving fire and a place where that saving fire exists, which is purgatory.

But the most cogent proof of the existence of this place of

suffering is found in the constant tradition of the Church, the Catholic Church which taught the truths of God for fifteen centuries before Protestantism began. Various councils have defined the doctrine of purgatory, and the writings of the Fathers on this point are clear and explicit. Take, for instance, the book of St. Augustine *On the Care of the Dead,* in which he teaches that there is such a place, that souls are in suffering there, and that they may be helped by the prayers of the faithful.

The Reasonableness of Purgatory. When God pardons sin, there often remains a temporal punishment, to be undergone either in this world or in the next. If the debt be not paid here, it must be paid hereafter. Again, many souls pass into eternity with unforgiven venial sins, although their mortal sins have been already pardoned. The punishment for these sins must be endured in purgatory. "The just man falls seven times a day." Many die without having expiated their small faults. They cannot enter heaven, for they are not purified, not ready to go into the presence of Him who is all-pure. They cannot be sent to hell, for they are not in mortal sin; they are friends of God, objects of His love, not enemies. Whither will they go? To a third place, where their unforgiven faults will be expiated, where they must remain until they are purified by fire from all earthly stain.

"But," some may say, "speaking of our eternal future, the Scriptures expressly state that 'as the tree falls, so shall it lie.' How, then, can there be any change, or any place of temporary detention, for a departed soul?" The meaning of these words is that every man who dies is either saved or lost. The judgment of God on the individual soul determines the ultimate fate of that soul, heaven or hell; but, though the lost soul will be immediately consigned to hell, the saved soul need not be immediately admitted to heaven.

The Place and the Penalties. Where is purgatory? We do not know. Some of the Fathers and theologians have made very fanciful conjectures, placing both purgatory and hell in the subterranean fires of the earth. Possibly a view of Ætna or Vesuvius in eruption may have suggested this idea, just as it inspired the

poetic genius and aided the vivid imagery of Dante. Some have even thought that certain souls are compelled to undergo their purgation in this world, in the places where they lived, a fancy borrowed evidently from the ghost-lore that is the common property of all nations. Our Catholic Church teaches us that there is a purgatory, but she does not teach us where it is.

What of the pains of purgatory? They are twofold, the *pain of loss* and the *pain of sense;* and they are temporary, not eternal.

The pain of loss is the grief that comes from separation from God, from the postponement of the beatific vision. The souls in purgatory have a most intense love of God. They are His friends, and they know that He loves them. They long to be with Him, and their "hope deferred" brings inexpressible suffering.

The pain of sense is physical pain. There is in purgatory some kind of fire which God permits to act on the soul. It is commonly believed that this is real material fire, but this is not an article of faith. All that we know is that the sufferings in that place of purgation are of dreadful intensity, as appears from the common teaching of Fathers and theologians, and from the solicitude of the Church in urging us to offer prayers, to perform good works and to gain indulgences for the holy souls.

Are the torments as severe as those of hell? No. Such is the opinion of the Church's spiritual writers, who reason thus: Those who are in purgatory are friends of God, not enemies. They are expiating venial sins only, or are being purified from the remains of forgiven sins, while the souls of the lost are being punished eternally for unforgiven mortal sin. The pain of the souls in purgatory is mitigated by security about their future glory (for they are certain of heaven) and by their resignation to the will of God. And they are not tormented by demons, as are the lost souls in hell, for there are no devils in purgatory. These souls are *saved* souls. By a happy death, by winning their eternal salvation, they have triumphed over the powers of evil and are no longer subject to them.

It is probable that the sufferings of all the souls in purgatory

are not equal; that these are greater or less according to the punishment due to each individual soul, or to the purgation needed by each. This may be true, in some degree, in regard to the pain of loss; it is considered as practically certain in regard to the pain of sense.

The Duration of the Punishment. How long may a soul be detained in purgatory? We do not know. The constant practice of the Church has been to exhort the faithful to pray for a long time for a soul that may be in purgatorial fires; and she often permits "pious foundations" or bequests which secure for many years the celebration of Masses for the dead. But theologians assure us that the length of the sentence varies for individual souls. A greater weight of venial sin will call for a longer punishment than would a lesser burden. The remains of many forgiven mortal sins will require more purifying than those of a few. "Thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing."

And moreover, as will be explained further on, the stay of a soul in purgatory may be shortened by the help which it may receive from those who are still in this life, still able to merit, and who apply their prayers and good works to the relief of the suffering souls.

In regard to our friends in purgatory, then, we know these things: They are certain of salvation, for they have already received the sentence which determines their lot for all eternity. They can never sin. They can practice faith, hope and charity; faith, because they do not yet see God as He is; hope, because they do not yet possess heaven; and charity, because they can and do love God intensely, and because by their prayers (according to a probable opinion which will be explained further on) they can help us who are still on earth, even though they cannot help themselves.

Why does the Church, in her prayers for the dead, ask that they "may be liberated from the pains of hell," that "darkness may not envelop them," etc.? Because when she uses expressions such as these the Church considers the human soul as having just

gone out of the body, and as being not yet sentenced. And so in her ritual prayers she beseeches God to deliver it from the danger of eternal punishment.

Prayers for the Dead. It is a part of the faith of the Catholic Church that the souls in purgatory can be helped by the prayers and good works of the faithful on earth. The members of the Church Suffering are in communion with the members of the Church Militant, and may receive not only sympathy but assistance from them.

The tradition of the Church in regard to prayers for the dead goes back to the earliest ages of her history. In the decrees of a council held at Carthage in the year 253 we find full authorization for such prayers; and later councils, notably those of Florence and Trent, have reaffirmed this ancient belief and practice. The writings of many of the Fathers of the Church mention and extol the same beautiful and consoling doctrine.

Truly may we say that it is a consoling doctrine. When we shall be in that abode of pain, no longer able to do aught for ourselves, yearning for the heavenly happiness which is deferred for a time, we are not left destitute. We can be aided by the loved and loving ones whom we have left behind. We can share in the Masses and devotions and indulgences and good works of the Church of God on earth, and our sufferings can be shortened by the charity of our fellow-Catholics who are still in this life.

How to Help the Souls. We may aid them in many ways: firstly, and most of all, by the holy sacrifice of the Mass; and it will be well to mention that this has always its own intrinsic value independently of the dispositions of the priest, so that even if he be in a state of sin his Mass will benefit the souls in purgatory. The same is true of prayers offered in the name of the Church, such as the Office for the Dead and the funeral prayers.

Secondly, we may help the souls by indulgences applied to them, as we have explained in a former chapter on that subject; by prayers, whether indulgenced or not; by Holy Communion, by almsgiving, and by other good works.

In order that the indulgences, private prayers, almsgivings, etc.,

may avail for the souls, it is necessary that the one who offers them be in the state of grace; for no indulgence can be gained by one in grievous sin.

What We Give Them. Do we, who help the souls, thereby deprive ourselves of anything? Not of *merit;* that is personal, and we cannot give it away. Not of *grace;* that also goes to the person who wins it. But we do voluntarily deprive ourselves of *the satisfaction of God's justice* which is an effect of prayer and good works. We give that satisfaction to those who need it even more than we do, and who cannot any longer do anything to obtain it for themselves.

Do our Masses, prayers and good works always help the soul for whom they are offered, if that soul be in purgatory? Probably yes. We cannot be certain, however, that that soul receives the full value and effect of our efforts in his behalf; a part may go to others. In other words, it all depends on the holy will of God.

Can the Souls Pray for Us? It is probable that they can and do, especially for those who pray for them. This would seem, in a way, to follow from the doctrine of the communion of saints. They need our prayers, and they know that we need theirs. It is possible, too, that God, who loves them, allows them to know who are their faithful friends on earth. And so we may invoke the aid and prayers of the holy souls, although the Church has not defined as a dogma the belief that they can hear or help us. We may, however, be sure of one thing: that when a soul is released from purgatory wholly or partly through our prayers, that soul will be eternally grateful to us. That soul will then be a saint of God, standing before His throne forever; and it will never cease its prayers for us until we too are in heaven in the eternal enjoyment of the vision of God.

"It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."

Chapter XXXIV

THE VISION OF GOD

GOD has revealed Himself to men and has bestowed His graces upon them that thereby He may lead them to everlasting life. He created us and endowed us with immortality, and He has destined us to eternal companionship with Himself if by our love and service we prove ourselves worthy of His love. "Eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those who love him."

Heaven is the eternal abode where the angels and the saints enjoy everlasting happiness in the presence of God and the vision of His glory. That never-ending bliss is the reward of fidelity to the law of God, which commands us to believe in Him, to hope in Him, and to love Him. And that reward consists in seeing and knowing and possessing God and enjoying His love forever. "I am thy reward exceeding great."

The Beatific Vision. The saints and angels in heaven see and know God. Here in this world we know Him *naturally,* from the effect of His power which we behold, and *supernaturally,* by faith, because He has revealed Himself to us. In heaven we shall know Him supernaturally in another and far more perfect way, by the beatific vision.

Our created intellect, when aided supernaturally, is capable of seeing God as He is in Himself; that is, in heaven we shall see Him clearly as to His essence and nature, the triune God, three persons in one divine nature. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." "We see now as in a mirror darkly, but then face to face." When we shall have gained our eternal reward

we shall see God with all His perfections, His omnipotence, His goodness, and all His other attributes; but as He is infinite while we still remain finite, we shall see and know Him only in so far as the capacity of our intellect admits. That intellect, although aided supernaturally, will still have its limitations. Even then we shall not comprehend God really "as He is." We shall know Him only in so far as He is knowable. The finite cannot compass the infinite.

The beatific vision will be the reward of our faith and our service. If we have lived in God's grace, or even if we have died possessing that grace, we shall see everything which we believed here without seeing. We shall enjoy the living presence of God forever; we shall be objects of His love for all eternity because we were worthy of that love when He summoned us to judgment.

The "Light of Glory." The supernatural aid by which we can see God in the beatific vision is called the light of glory. By it the intellect of man is illumined and perfected in such a manner and to such a degree that it can receive the vision of God.

Do all the blessed ones in heaven behold God and enjoy Him in an equal degree? No. They see Him according to the diversity of their merits, one more perfectly than another. The vision of God is the wages of the good acts that have been done here through His grace, and wages vary according to one's deserving. But for one and for all there will be complete happiness, complete satisfaction in that vision. All will be filled with love of God, all will enjoy Him and praise Him, and all will be happy in His love forever.

Our Knowledge in Heaven. Besides seeing and knowing God for all eternity, we shall have knowledge of all created things, at least of all things that concern us in any way. In other words, every just and worthy desire will be satisfied. Here in this world we have believed many things because they were revealed to us by God, but we did not understand them. In heaven, the mysteries of our faith will be mysteries no longer. We shall understand such things as the incarnation, the redemption, predes-

tination, and all the other truths which in this world were beyond the capacity of our human intellect.

We shall know perfectly the natural things which we knew only imperfectly here. The scientist will possess full knowledge where he had only partial knowledge in this life, and he will not need labor or study or experiment to acquire that knowledge. Heaven and earth, the stars, the elements, the animal and vegetable kingdoms—all of these will be known in their entirety by those who were interested in them here. The astronomer will no longer be compelled to peer through his telescope and engage in endless calculations. All the wonders of the starry universe will be his. The geologist will know all the secrets of this earthly globe; the naturalist will not need to study the flora and fauna which diversify its surface. What a wonderful sum of knowledge will be possessed by the intellect which sought for truth in regard to these things during its earthly career! No more experimenting, no more doubts, no more theories; absolute certitude concerning all created things—such will be a part of the heavenly reward of him whom we call an educated man. Necessarily this kind of knowledge will vary in nature and degree according to the intellectual capacity and likings of each individual.

Knowledge of Earthly Things. We shall know also everything that pertains to the state or position which we filled while on earth. The soul of a Pope will be rendered happier by beholding the progress of the Church; bishops and pastors and religious men and women will rejoice in the welfare of their dioceses and parishes and communities. Parents will have knowledge of their families; relatives and friends will know all that they need to know concerning those on earth who were dear to them.

We shall know the graces which are given to those whom we have left behind us. "There is joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance." We shall know all the prayers which will be addressed to us when we shall be numbered with the saints of God in heaven.

Our Friends in Heaven. "In heaven we shall know our own."

To be among the blessed will increase our bliss, and there will be an added happiness in meeting again those who were dear to us in this life. Parents and children, husbands and wives, friends long separated by death, all who win heaven will be reunited there; and they will be free from spot or blemish or imperfection.

The loving mother whose eyes you closed in death, so many years ago, the fair young wife whose loss made another's life so lonely, the little maiden, pure and holy, whom God took to Himself because "of such is the kingdom of heaven," the manly Catholic youth, true to his country and his God, whose body lies in a nameless foreign grave—all of these are waiting for you, holier and more perfect than they ever were in this life. Their love and companionship will be an added happiness for us throughout all eternity. The love of earthly days will be increased, sanctified, perfected, because those whom we love will be saints of God.

But what of those who do not win heaven? What of the mother whose son never rejoins her there, even though she has prayed for him through life and after death? What of the friend who was dear to us and whose soul is lost? Spiritual writers teach us that in the presence of God we shall have such a knowledge and consciousness of His infinite majesty, of His ineffable justice and of His unbounded mercy; that our love for Him will overshadow our love for all others; and that we shall have no sorrow for those who have sinned unrepentingly against that majesty, have defied that justice, and have not sought that mercy. We shall be so loyal to our God that we shall no longer love His enemies. Any former friend of ours, any one whom we have loved, will be no longer a friend, no longer loved, because he has become through his own fault a rebel against our King, an enemy of our God.

Eternity with the Saints. We shall know all the saints of God, the famous ones whose names are in the calendar of the Church, and the millions of others of all times and all nations. Will it not be an addition to your happiness when you become personally acquainted with the meek and patient St. Joseph, with the devout St. Rita, with the pure St. Agnes? The souls of

patriarchs and prophets, of Apostles and martyrs, of holy men and women of every age and clime—all of these countless millions of them, will be your friends. The angels, pure and heavenly spirits, will hover over you. Your guardian angel who was your friend and guide here on earth, will rejoice with you forever in the victory you have gained. Mary, the Mother of God—your Mother as well, and mine—who has interceded for you through life, will receive you and love you as her child, ransomed by the blood of her divine Son.

Jesus Christ, our loving Saviour, in His sacred humanity, with His glorified body bearing the marks of the wounds of Calvary, will be there before you, seated at the right hand of God the Father. He will welcome you with infinite tenderness and love, because for you His sufferings and death have not been in vain. Loving words will greet you: "Come, thou blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for thee."

And even the privilege of seeing our incarnate Saviour, though it will be a far more glorious vision than that vouchsafed to the Apostle on Mount Tabor, will not be the climax of our heavenly happiness. We shall know and enjoy God forever! We shall see God the Father, who "so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son." We shall see God the Son, not merely in the human nature and form which He took that He might die for us, but in His eternal divine nature as well. We shall see God the Holy Ghost, whose graces have sanctified us and brought us to our eternal heritage. There will be no fear, no dread, when we contemplate the perfections of God. We shall be filled with love for Him, and we shall be the objects of His love forever. For all eternity we shall be His and He will be ours. "The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isai. xxxv. 10).

The Body and the Soul. At the general judgment our bodies will rise again, and thereafter they will share in the eternal

happiness of our souls. These bodies, now so frail and perishable, will then have glorious qualities. They will be endowed with *impassibility;* they will be no longer subject to corruption or suffering. They will be illumined with *brightness,* with heavenly splendor. They will possess *agility;* that is, they will be able to move from place to place in an instant. And they will have the quality of *subtility;* they will be spiritualized, like the risen body of our Saviour, and capable of penetrating anywhere. The body will be no longer "the prison-house of the soul," no longer a clog to its spiritual energies, but an efficient instrument for its activities, sharing with it the glory and happiness of eternity.

The Crown of Glory. Special honors will be given to some souls, by which their glory and happiness will be increased, special marks of distinction and dignity, granted for various causes. They are, as it were, an added reward bestowed on account of the eminent perfection and virtues of the individual soul, on account of the spiritual marks or characters impressed on it by Baptism or Confirmation or Holy Orders, and because of work done and victories gained by it here on earth. Martyrs are victors over the powers of the world; virgins over the flesh; teachers of the faith and preachers over the devil. All of these will receive a spiritual mark of honor according to their deserving; this is called their aureole, or crown of glory.

How bright the crown which a priest will wear who has been faithful to his priesthood! Around him will be the souls for whom he labored, the saints whom he guided to heaven, those who had been sinners, and who received from him the pardon of their sins as did the penitent Magdalen from the merciful Saviour; those pure ones, too, who lived sinless lives because he counselled them wisely and kept them pure. All these will be the crown of the good priest in heaven.

How happy the eternity of the spouse of Christ, the consecrated virgin, who gave up all the transitory things of earth that she might serve God only, and thereby won His eternal love and the vision of His glory forever! She also has helped others to win

heaven, and their gratitude and love will be a part of her eternal recompense.

For All Eternity. "If any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever." "Every one that liveth and believeth in me shall not die forever." In heaven there will be no danger of losing happiness when it is once won. Heaven will have no end. The saints of God will have all the happiness that the infinite love of God can bestow, and that happiness will be eternal.

Let us look forward a million millions of years. The earth on which we now live will, perhaps, no longer exist; the sun and the stars will have passed, perhaps, into nothingness. The "consummation of all things," it may be, will be accomplished; the great judgment day may be over. If so, even purgatory will have ceased to be. All created things will have passed away, except heaven and hell and their inhabitants. In hell the torments of the damned will be as awful as they are now, and no nearer their end. In heaven, the choirs of angels will proclaim unceasingly the glory of God; and standing with them before His throne will be that "great multitude that no man can number," the souls and living bodies of the saints of God, enjoying happiness of which we can form no conception here, for things of earth can give us no idea of those that are of heaven. Oh! that we may be among that multitude! God, our beginning and our end, will be before us in the beatific vision. His incarnate Son, who redeemed us, will be our King. The Immaculate Mother of God will be our Mother also. The saints of God will be our friends for all eternity.

"There we no longer shall divide our time
  By acts or pleasures—doing petty things
Of work or warfare, merchandise or rhyme;
  But we shall sit beside the silver springs
That flow from God's own footstool, and behold
  Sages and martyrs, and those blessed few
Who loved us once and were beloved of old—
  To dwell with them and walk with them anew

In alternations of divine repose,
Musical motion, the perpetual play
Of every faculty that heaven bestows,
Through the bright, busy, and eternal day."

— T. W. PARSONS, *Paradisi Gloria.*

May you and I, dear reader, meet there before the throne of God, saved by the merits of Jesus, pardoned by His mercy, objects of His infinite love, privileged to behold the beatific vision of God throughout all eternity!

THE END

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